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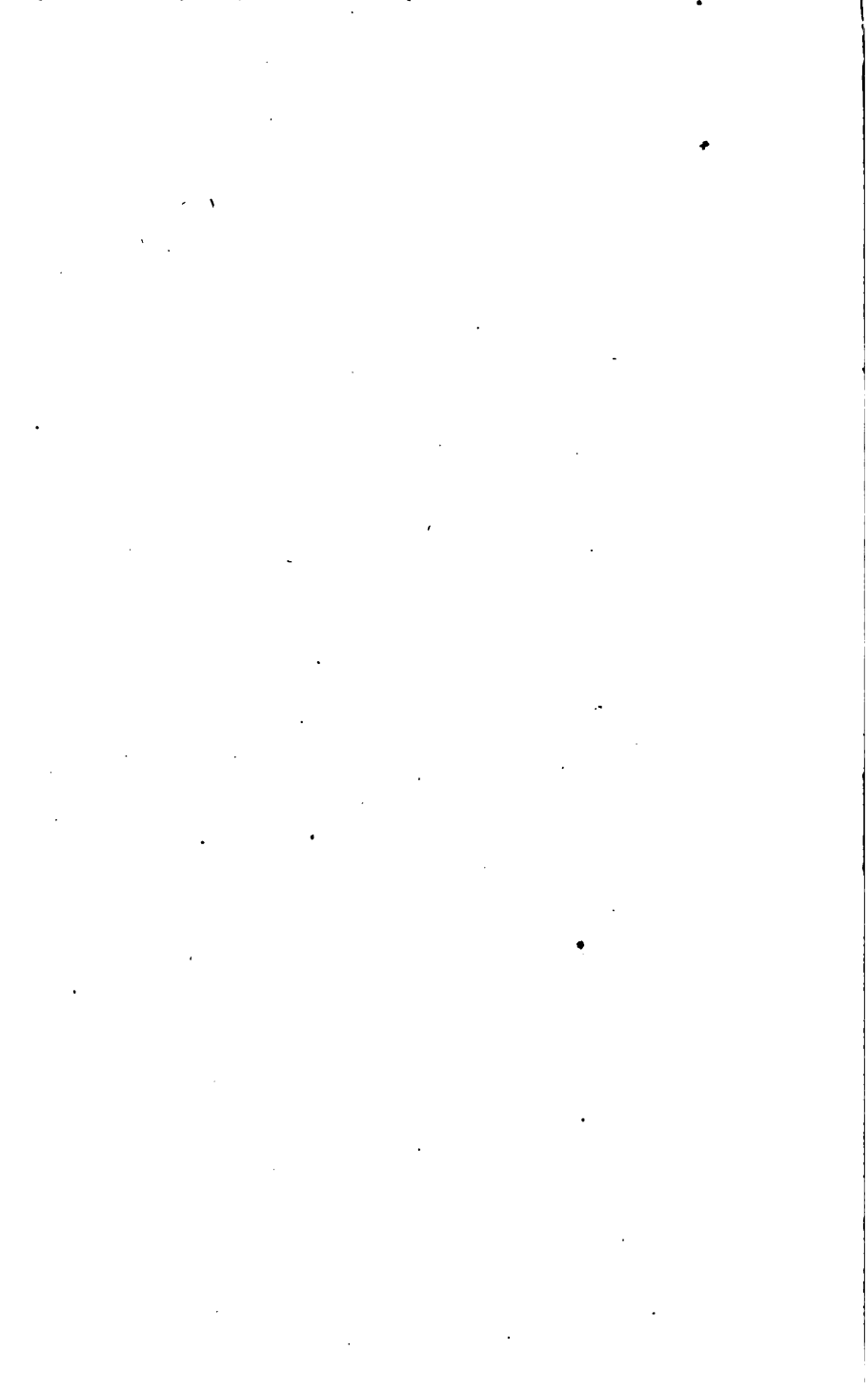
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Lizzie Blomberg

CASTLE CRAZY;

AND

MAROSHELY.

BY ADALBERT STIFTER.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1851.

LONDON:

Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.



CASTLE CRAZY.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREEN FICHTAU.

HANS VON SCHARNAST had entailed his estate in an extraordinary manner. His castle of Rothenstein, together with its dependencies, fishing, hunting, and mountain rights, was always to descend in a direct line to the eldest son ; should there be no son, to the daughters ; and in default of these to the eldest collateral line, and so on, till the chance should occur that neither cognate nor agnate were left of the family, in which case the said castle and its appurtenances would pass to the exchequer. So

far so good; but a condition was annexed to the entail which gave the whole affair another aspect. To wit, every one to whom the castle descended as his rightful heritage, must before it could be surrendered to him swear two things: first, that he, faithfully and without the slightest deviation from truth, would write the history of his life, from the period of his earliest recollections until the time when he should no longer be able to hold the pen;—this his biography, to be placed, volume by volume, as it was completed, in the fire-proof chamber hewn for the purpose in the rock of red marble which rose within the castle walls, and whence its name of Rothenstein was derived; secondly, that he would read through all the preceding autobiographies, without, however, being permitted to carry any one of them away from the chamber in the rock. Whoever either could not or would not fulfil both these conditions was to be considered as dead and passed over accordingly. If the heir should be a minor, the estate was to be kept under guardianship till he came of age, and could declare whether he would take the oath or not. And if, upon the death of any one of the successive lords of Rothenstein, it were found that he had not left his autobiography in the Red Rock, his name was to be blotted out from the genealogical line, and his

posterity set aside for the next heir, as though they had never been born.

There were two motives that induced Hans to attach so strange a clause to the entail. First, although he was a thoroughly good and virtuous man, he had in the course of his life committed so many follies and extravagancies, and had suffered so much shame and vexation in consequence of his heedlessness, that he resolved to write all down to a hair, and to impose upon his descendants the duty of describing their lives also, to the end that those who should come after might read, and learn wisdom from the experience of their forefathers.

His second motive was, that he hoped every one who had the most distant reversionary claim upon Rothenstein, would keep himself free from vice and immorality, lest he should some day be compelled to record his misdeeds, or at least half confess them, by refusing the oath.

As to the first point, Hans' expedient unfortunately had the contrary effect to that which he desired. For there was in the Scharnasts so much wild blood, and so great a predisposition to extravagance, that the latter Counts Scharnast, instead of taking warning from the autobiographies of their revered ancestors, made them their examples, and

indulged in a variety of odd humours such as are rarely to be met with except in autobiographies; nay, even they who had hitherto led a quiet and regular life, seemed suddenly to veer round the moment they came into possession of the crazy old castle; and thus affairs became worse as the number of its possessors, and the quantity of rubbish with which every new lord was bound to fill his head, multiplied. The founder of the family would have turned round in his grave, could he through the thick rocky walls of his vault have heard what people said; have heard his own beloved Rothenstein designated as the "Narrenburg."*

With respect to his second object, it was not exactly clear how far it had been attained; to be sure, a great deal of evil was said of the Scharnasts, but only darkly and uncertainly; still, this was certain, that nobody could remember the time when any one of them had been set up as a pattern of virtue.

The castle now lay almost in ruins, and since the last Scharnast had been shot in Africa, it was hardly expected that a claimant for the Rothenstein property would ever again appear, and an impudent wag had already mooted the question, whether the exchequer, too, must not swear to write its autobiography.

* Fool's-castle.

Such was the position of affairs when the events happened which we shall relate in the following pages.

One fine summer day, towards evening, in the year 1836, a young and rather handsome man was passing along the romantic valley of the Fichtau, by the side of the river Pernitz. In spite of his fresh, kindly countenance, this man's appearance was such as rather excited ridicule, for he was fantastically dressed, and laden with the strangest things. Suspended from a leathern belt passing over his shoulder hung a large flat pouch, which was no slight hindrance to his walking ; on the side of this pouch a piece of wood was buckled, which, on being drawn out, supplied the framework of a camp-stool. Upon his back he carried a knapsack,—so broad, that it stood out on each side of his person ; from it hung a long handled hammer and an axe ; and to the top of it were fastened a large grey umbrella and a long rifle, both of which projected horizontally over his shoulders, so that at a distance he looked like a walking cross. His hand grasped a stick with strong iron points ; for the rest, he wore a broad straw hat and iron-tipped boots, and his coat struck like a pendulum against his feet at every step, as if both pockets were full of iron or stones. Thus accoutred had he been seen for several weeks wandering about the mountains of the Fichtau.

The Fichtau is a beautiful mountain district, abounding with soft red marble, fresh green woods, and icy-cold springs. The Pernitz rushes through it, noisily and rapidly at first, but gradually becomes tame and domestic, watering the meadows and turning fullers' mills. The Fichtau is situated a few days' journey eastward from the village of Grünberg, and the pleasant market-town of Pirling, which both lie near this same river of Pernitz. There is no single village throughout the Fichtau, but it is strewn with detached houses and farms; and many a countryman, as he went out to his labour, saw the aforesaid wanderer, despite his heavy burdens, clambering up rocks and cutting stones from them, wherewith he loaded himself and then rambled on farther. Often, too, might he be seen sitting upon his camp-stool, his iron-pointed stick planted firmly in the earth, the handle of his umbrella screwed upon it, and thus shaded from the hot sun he would sketch trees, or bits of rock, to which none of the inhabitants had ever given a thought, though they had lived in the valley all their lives. Or sometimes he was seen passing with a huge bouquet of flowers and herbs in one hand, whilst the other dragged along with his stick boughs and roots of various kinds.

On the fine summer evening before-mentioned,

he was walking more quickly than usual on the shores of the Pernitz, indulging the while in sundry uneasy movements with his hands and arms, like one who is impatient and hasty, or is talking to himself. In truth, this man had been early infected with the bad habit of soliloquising; and, still worse, he had the trick of restlessly moving his hands about, especially when stung by indignation or impatience, which emotions could, in him, be easily excited.

He was now steering his way towards a group of houses. At the spot where the valley widened, and the narrow cart-road changed to a broad highway, stood the hostel of the Fichtau, called the "Green Fichtau," built only of wood, but with a splendid row of windows, looking out upon the high road, which was so broad and level that a hundred waggons might have stood there. Sheds and granaries, and a large garden, extended behind the house, sloping down into another and lesser valley, which was watered by a rapid brook. On the opposite side of the brook stood a saw-mill, next to it a forge, and farther back, behind the garden, four or five houses with bright windows and pretty flat mountain-roofs.

To this group of houses our Wanderer hastened, as if he had something weighty upon his mind; and the nearer he came the faster he moved, so that his

walk degenerated into a half-run, just as he reached the inn.

"God greet you, father Erasmus," said he, hastily, to the host, who, with his great dog, was standing in the road, chatting with the smith and the carrier. This last was a sort of weekly messenger, accustomed every Saturday to visit the hostel of the "Green Fichtau," where he retailed to the inhabitants sundry little articles from the flat country. His horse was in the stable, his waggon in the shed, and he now sat in the evening sun on the long bench placed against the wall of the inn, smoking his pipe and displaying his various commodities: "God greet you, father Erasmus," said the Wanderer, as he approached; "I will just run up and take these things to my room and return immediately, for I have a whole host of questions to ask you. I have discovered, to-day, the most wonderful ruins in the world, and have sketched them, too." And with these words he went up stairs.

"I suppose he means that he has found 'Castle Crazy,'" said the host. He spoke to his two other guests; but the Wanderer, being blessed with a quick sense of hearing, caught the words as he passed, and became thereby still more excited. Unloading himself, and changing his coat, in little more than a minute, he came back immediately,

bearing a paper in his hand, upon which some half-ruined walls, picturesquely grouped upon rocks, were neatly sketched.

"That is a most singular building," said he; "I have been four whole hours clambering round it, and have not been able to find any entrance."

"Oh, indeed," said the host, looking slyly at the two others.

"Why do you say 'Oh, indeed?' The matter is exactly as I have said; and I do not understand what your 'Oh! indeed' can mean.

"I only mean," answered the host, "that every man in the Fichtau knows it, and that it is wonderful that you alone should not know it."

"I don't see how I should know it. I tell you, I have discovered the castle to-day, and it is as new to me as the continent of America would have been three centuries and a half ago. In your country there is so little of the spirit of inquiry, that the finest marble is allowed to remain unheeded, or at most made into troughs for swine. You yourself have choked up your sewer with pieces of the most delicate and beautiful stone."

"Have I so? well, well, friend, if you inquire a little farther, you will find door-blocks and water-vats made of the same material; and if you inquire up stairs, you will find in Anna's sleeping-room

very pretty window-ledges carved out of it, a washing-table, a holy-water vessel, and I don't know what besides ; and in the Pernitz, too, are lying bits and blocks innumerable, which nobody cares for except the trouts, who slip in and out among them."

"I have already seen and observed all that, except the washing-table and holy-water vessel," returned the Wanderer, "you have door-posts, too, that is well ; but one of your hearth-corners is of red marble and the other of brick : however, that is nothing to the purpose.—You speak of trouts, have we any for to-morrow ? You promised us some on Sunday."

"There are a million below in the fish-trough,—a million."

"I should like to have a dozen," said the smith. "My son-in-law, the town-clerk, is coming to-morrow."

"Shalt have them, black boy," said the host, "only send over here. So the town-clerk is coming, and the snow-white Trini,* too—we shall see, we shall see."

And with these words he moved his head backwards and forwards, as if in thought, and his huge, grey, spotted dog, sitting with his back opposite the setting sun, his rough hairs glittering

* Trini, an abbreviation of Katharina.

like fiery spears, looked knowingly up into his master's face, as if he read his thoughts. But the young Wanderer stepped in front of him with a resolute air, his drawing in his hand, and also looking him in the face, addressed him thus :

“ What you say of the trouts is well-said, father Erasmus,—and to-morrow we shall greet the town-clerk and the snow-white Trini. I shall put on my best coat, and go to church with you ; but now give me a short hearing. The evening is beautiful. We have all been fagging to-day ; to-morrow is Sunday, and so we may surely chat a little while in the twilight. Let me bring the wine here ; I will sit down beside Simon, on the bench, and when he has told you the price of corn, and exhausted all his histories of horses and wine, and crimes and misfortunes of all kinds, then you shall look at this paper of mine, and tell me what there is about this castle that everybody knows, this same castle that stands in the very heart of the Fichtau, bearing upon it the stamp, not only of antiquity, but of romance ; and built, so it seems to me, in no style at all.”

“ I am right glad, neighbour, that Trini is coming here,” said the host, “ provided she do not again bring a whole cargo of books to shower down upon Anna. And we must see before sunrise that there is salmon caught, and in the afternoon we will

shoot at the target—or some such thing—that every one may be well entertained. I am very glad of it. And as for your castle, young man, you might see styles in plenty, if Ruprecht would consent to let you in for once in a way, ay, and castles in plenty, too, a collection of castles, half a town of castles, built and stuck about upon your favourite red stones.”

“But who is this Ruprecht, and how shall I get him to let me in?”

“Easy enough,” answered father Erasmus, “if you could first get him to come out.”

“As for that, he was at Priglitz, yesterday,” said the smith, and “spoke with my son-in-law, the town-clerk; I was standing by, and heard him say that no heir had yet been found.”

“I saw him, too,” now interrupted Simon, the messenger, “it really is the case, and a most astonishing thing it is, that a family once so princely and wide-spread, should now be utterly extinct—not so much as a mouse has brought forward a claim. The castle, dear young sir, which has interested you so much that you have drawn it upon paper, that same castle is now to be had and plenty of rents along with it; it is only necessary that you should be descended from a tolerably hair-brained sort of family.”

"I belong to Rothenstein, myself," said the host, "and so does the whole quarter of Pernitz, together with tithes and dues, besides the land to the left as far as Hatzleser, and, I believe, the forest-houses as far as Ottostift and Asang."

"Asang belongs to it, too," said the smith, "it has only been mortgaged to the Priglitzers since old Julian's time ; my son-in-law, the town-clerk, told me so."

"There you are wrong," cried Simon the carrier, "I am from Asang, and I, and my father, and grandfather, and his father, too, have always paid taxes to the Priglitzers, and have never touched a hat to Rothenstein and his crazy house."

"That is," replied the smith, "because old Julian is older than you all, not even excepting your precious pie-bald steed, and because you were mortgaged to Priglitz before you were born. My son-in-law, the town-clerk, showed me the document at the town-house : and yesterday he said that all would revert to the Emperor, and that then the mortgage-money would be paid off, and Asang would again become part of the old estate. That Julian was a terrible man ; he killed his own brother."

"No, not killed him," said the host ; "he only robbed him of his mother's inheritance, because he had not enough, even though Rothenstein had

fallen to his share. It was in our house that the meeting took place,—my grandfather was then a lad, he has told us the story a hundred times—it was the last time that the brothers saw each other. They were called Julianus and Julius; Julianus was the elder, and when his father died Julius was in foreign parts: he did not come to Rothenstein at all; but they met in our court-yard—it was years since they had seen each other. They spoke, they embraced, and their swords clashed as they embraced, and then they went up stairs to the green upper room, leaving their horses in the road. The children, that is to say, my grandfather and his sister, sat with their mother in the tap-room below, and listened anxiously, for their hearts misgave them. At first they heard nothing but the regular steps of the two men, as they walked soldierly up and down; then all was silence, as though they stood still, and one were speaking. My great-grandfather, who was then the inn-keeper, came down to the children, with a face as white as a sheet; he told them that he had just ventured to look in to ask if they wanted anything, but that they had sent him away angrily, and that Julius was standing by the table, and drinking a terrible quantity of wine. My great-grandfather then stayed down stairs with the children, and they listened a long, long time, but all

was still above—quite still ; then, all at once was heard a stamp, so violent, one would think it must have cracked all the beams in the house ; and the next minute the swords were clashing again, but only for a few seconds,—soon it was still as death. Immediately after, Julius ran down stairs, swung himself with flashing eyes upon his black steed, spurred and rode past the stone wall yonder so quickly that my grandfather saw the horse's hinder hoofs strike up such a succession of sparks that he could have fancied them on fire, or that the horse was flinging them up into the air ; while pieces of the red paving-stones flew into the Pernitz. Every one ran without delay into the upper room to succour the murdered Julianus ; but he was standing alive at the table, fiercely stroking with his hand those great red moustachios which he always wore ; then he swallowed a whole pitcher-full of wine, threw a piece of money upon the table, came down and rode calmly off to Rothenstein. He was henceforth lord of the castle, as the first-born ought to be ; but besides that, he was lord of the treasure and rents that had belonged to their deceased mother, which of right should have descended to Julius. As to Julius, from that time not so much as a thread of his garment has been visible in the Fichtau."

"Clearly because Julianus murdered him by some means or other," rejoined the smith.

"Then he must have buried him deeper than rain and dew can penetrate," returned the host; "for neither the Pernitz nor our mountain-torrents have ever washed him up again. Come, come, neighbour, that is recorded no where but in your Trini's romance books."

"My son-in-law, the town-clerk," said the smith, "is of opinion, that as the last of Julian's posterity is dead, and the castle, with its moveables and fixtures, has been advertised all over the country, it is strange that not a claw, not a nail has been discovered of any pretender thereto; and that, therefore, Julius must have been murdered."

"The fact is this, children," said Simon, the carrier, as he cleared out and replenished his pipe, performing the operation slowly and circumstantially, and constantly interrupting his discourse with a vigorous 'puff, puff.' "The fact is this: far out in the country years ago, I was told by a pedlar that Julius had entered the service of the French king; this, however, was contradicted by an old wooden-legged soldier, who insisted that Julius had lived not very far off the Fichtau—that he had married a peasant girl, and had given his daughter to a man of low birth; and that thus by degrees

the old family had been lost among the common people, whence it had originally sprung."

"It may be so," said the host; "or it may not be so; but that Julian murdered him I will not believe: they were never so bad as that, though almost all mad."

The Wanderer had listened so far with increasing interest; he now set down his pitcher and said, "Indeed! how do you know that they were mad?"

"Now, in the name of common sense," answered the host, "mad enough, surely, young master;—did you not see, when you were at the castle, that it has neither gate nor entrance of any kind, and is, as you say yourself, built in no style at all? Or do you think it was reasonable to do as the last sprig of the tree of Julian did, or as his father did before him? With our last Lord it happened thus. The French, by way of atoning for the injustice they had practised in our provinces, had sent armies into the Moors' country, to make every one there Christian. Count Christopher hears this, and suddenly, one fine morning, has the castle walled up, and rides post haste down the mountain, away to the Moorish land to take the heathens' part against the Christians: and there he was happily shot dead; whether by heathens or Christians nobody knows. His father, Count Jodok, was still worse; I knew

him well—in his old age he let his beard grow, just like one of the Three Holy Kings ; and I often used to see him, after he had set the castle on fire, sitting in front of his little hut at the foot of the mountain.”

“ What ! did he really set the castle on fire ? ”

“ Yes, he himself set light to it one Whitsun morning, and warned away all those who came to extinguish the flames, because he said that ever so many hundred weights of powder were in the vaults and would explode ;—however, nothing did explode, and the building burned down quite peaceably to the ground. He had for many years before kept house there with tolerable order and regularity, except that over the gate stood the inscription,—‘ Here nothing is given to beggars.’ ”

“ But is not the castle held upon trust ? How, then, could he destroy it ? ”

“ It is, as you say, held upon trust ; but then within the walls, at some little distance from the other buildings, he had erected an outlandish-looking temple, with a multitude of pillars, like those you see in the summer-houses of the Imperial Gardens ; and in this temple he is said to have lived in extraordinary pomp and magnificence, with his wife, a most beautiful gipsy whom he brought from afar ; and it was this building that he set on fire. It was

certainly his own property ; but, nevertheless, the law courts obliged him to lay down plenty of money to pay for his freak—so they say. Well, some time before, he had built, under the mountain, a little stone house with two rooms, and there he spent the last days of his old age till he died. His son, Christopher, was absent during his father's life-time; after his death he returned : and on another spot within the castle-walls he erected another building, part of which fell in three years ago. And so you see they were all crack-brained. My grandfather has told us that the father of Julius and Julianus, Count Procopius, often sat whole nights long upon a high tower—the tower is still standing,—where he had long telescopes turned up towards the stars ; and there was a strange instrument of his that gave out long, deep, fearful tones which were heard at night-time far in the mountains : it seemed as if all the woods were groaning.”

“ So the possessors of Rothenstein were counts ? ” inquired the Wanderer.

“ Their title has been Count Scharnast ever since the Hussite war, before then they were only barons and knights ; but the family was always rich, and would be so still if Julian had not squandered away so much.”

“ Then I must immediately write a letter respect-

ing this family," said the Wanderer," and you must send it to Priglitz this very day by a special messenger."

At these words all, even the phlegmatic Simon, who sat beside him, looked the Wanderer in the face, and began to laugh. The host, however, replied, "If you wish to describe the castle and the counts, certainly they are rather more worth the trouble than our stones, and the Pernitz, and the hay-making, which have employed you hitherto; but in that case you had better apply to old Ruprecht, he can give you the best information."

"I am not going to describe any of it; but go immediately and get me a messenger to Priglitz."

"Nothing more easy than that," said the host. "It is Saturday, and this evening the wood-keeper's men must be coming from the mountains, I expect them every minute; and for money and good words one of them will do your errand, no doubt."

"That is true," returned the Wanderer; "I had in my hurry forgotten the wood-keeper's men altogether; several of them will be going that way, will they not, or at least not far off?"

"Of course, of course," said the host, chuckling; and presently, as if he could not suppress the rising thought, he began sily—"If, then, you are not going to describe the castle, perhaps you intend—"

“ I intend what ? ”

“ To be a descendant of Julius ? ” and the host ended his sentence apparently with great satisfaction, and looking exceedingly knowing.

But without changing his countenance in the least, his companion replied, “ That might possibly be the case, father Erasmus.”

The host, though accustomed to not a few extravagancies on the part of his lodger, was evidently a little confounded at the dry tone of his answer ; but not to let himself be vanquished in the war of words, he took a still greater liberty, and said, “ If it be so, then what I have hoped will not come to pass.”

“ And pray what had you hoped ? ”

“ Why I thought to myself, if Julius has married a peasant girl, then, as the old stock will have been engrafted afresh—just as in our fields we sow a different kind of grain when the soil grows poor—then, if it be as they say, we might, perchance, have a man of sense for our master.”

But, as before, without in the slightest degree losing his composure, the Wanderer replied, fixing his glance steadily upon the host, “ What will you say, Erasmus, if I settle here, and to your surprise, some bright day, prove myself to be cleverer than all of you and the whole Fichtau put together—those

excepted," added he, in a gayer tone, "who are coming yonder, for they are the finest fellows in the world."

He had scarcely spoken the words when two of those picturesque forms, which we so often see figuring in landscapes of mountain scenery, turned round the corner, merrily threw down their tools and utensils, to wit, axes, saws, alpine staffs, scaling ladders, culinary vessels, &c., either on the road or on the long bench, and prepared to take their places at the table. The evening scene in the court of the Green Fichtau now began to change and to acquire that air of cheerfulness, to which our Wanderer was accustomed to look forward every Saturday, and which he so much loved. He gave no farther heed to the host, but, already seated beside the two new-comers, had engaged in a sprightly conversation with them. They had laid aside their green hats, plumed with feathers and goats' beards, and thrown off their grey mountain-coats; and two jovial sun-burnt faces were now fixed thirstily upon the host, who brought them each a glass full of that insufferable mountain-wine, which hard labour alone could suffice to make not only a tolerable but a really pleasant and refreshing beverage.

"Let your women make us some dumplings," said one, "and plenty of them, for Melchior and

the others are coming, and the men from the wood-pits and the Grahn are coming too; I saw them descending the mountain just as we reached the Pernitz, and I heard their shouts. One of Gregory's lambs has fallen, up by the Black Rock; he almost wept over it, and is now bearing it on his shoulders down the Giant steep."

"That is the reason he comes so slowly," said the host; "I have heard the sheep-bells for the last half hour."

As he spoke another group approached, singing and shouting as they came, and quickly assembled round the great table of the Green Fichtau, for the purpose of taking a glass of wine and of doing honour to the joyful ending of the week; for they had for six whole days seen nothing but green trees, and grey and red stones, and having received their wages, were now hastening home. Greetings and congratulations were heard on all sides.

"You have done good service: the Kaiser plain is strewn with wrecks."

"Famous weather! We were on the Peak. I have not seen so far for fifteen years. The plain lay like a picture before us; and I might have counted almost all the windows in the town. We saw your smoke rising from the wood-pits."

"Yes, we were in the wood-pits, and have been

there six weeks. Old Procopius' ghost is abroad again : I know it for certain. He has been making music at night-time : I heard it myself, and this afternoon, too ; for, just about four o'clock, whenever a light breeze passed through the firs, it wafted over to us distinctly those deep melancholy tones from the ruined castle."

" I have heard that spoken of before, but I don't believe it."

" The wine is like wormwood," cried another.

" Drink it quickly, gossip Melchior," said the host ; " you will drink in health and strength with it, like iron and steel ! "

Thus they laughed and chatted. Many other guests had arrived, among them two huntsmen. Their goods were scattered all about the road : whole heaps and bundles of scaling-ladders, mountain-staffs, coarse woollen coverlets, mountain-hats, iron vessels and other chattels innumerable. Pitchers and glasses went round. The dumplings appeared and disappeared, and two guitars were brought, on which some of the party performed ; while the rest, most of them distinguished by that swarthy complexion and bright eagle glance, peculiar to mountaineers, sat sociably round, and gave the history of their doings and adventures. And a glorious evening, meantime, had drawn over the landscape. The sun

had vanished beneath the skirting of woods that now threw their cooling shade over the Pernitz; the rocks at the back of the houses glowed with the richest and most varied hues; and the air floated like liquid gold over the green fir-crests. All Nature seemed to be enjoying her sabbath rest and preparing for the Sunday festival.

The hunters were come from the mountains, the miners were wending their way homewards, and most of them stopped to rest awhile at the Green Fichtau. Wives, and daughters, and maid-servants were at the brook, washing stools, chairs, and all kinds of wooden utensils; the noise of the saw-mills had ceased, and the flocks and herds, whose bells had been heard for a long time ringing melodiously from various sides of the mountain, had now at last reached the valley behind the inn. And now they marched orderly forwards, an assemblage of different domestic animals, which might almost be looked upon as the whole collected property of the Fichtau. Foremost came the light-footed race of goats and rams, variously coloured and spotted, almost every one of them bearing a bell round its neck, so that the sound which from afar had seemed so sweet and musical, now became a discordant jingle; then followed sheep, both black and white, and in the midst of them advanced a herd of the

sleek, grave-looking mountain cattle. Boys or servant-maids came forwards to meet and conduct to their stalls such of the animals as belonged to this place; the remainder went farther on their way, or very composedly stood still, or walked up to the company at the inn door, looking familiarly around them, and suffering themselves to be caressed, the bells at their necks tinkling all the while. At last appeared upon the scene the grey, weather-beaten shepherd's dog, and his master, the shepherd Gregory, who was laden with a bundle of scaling-ladders, and carried a dead lamb in his arms; he was followed closely by the mother-ewe, bleating, and looking piteously into his face. In the person of Gregory had arrived the last guest accustomed to drink his glass of wine on Saturday evening at the Green Fichtau; but to day he was sad, for the fallen lamb was his own; he laid it on the bench, his eyes still fixed upon it, whilst the mother snuffed at it and licked it all over.

"Come, drink away your vexation, Gregory," said the host, "to-day the wine costs you nothing; and I will pay you a good price for the lamb to-morrow."

"It is not for that," answered Gregory, "but it was such a pretty, merry creature." However he sat down and carried the glass slowly to his lips.

And more and more solemnly did the evening-twilight draw its veil over the dusky mountain-summits, more and more softly rippled the waters of the Pernitz, and more and more sweetly sounded the guitars.

The Wanderer sat among these sons of the mountain. He had eaten his evening-meal, and talked and jested now with one, now with another. He always delighted in these Saturday evenings, and although his manner of life and favourite pursuits were looked upon as useless and absurd, yet everybody liked him because he entered heart and soul into their interests, and could at times speak like a rational being. Father Erasmus was now here, now there, talked to all, and drank soberly down his single glass of good old mountain wine. His people and maids had cleared and cleaned out the house ready for Sunday; had hung up fresh window-curtains, and got ready their holiday-clothes. Thus merrily the hours passed by; as the night approached, the noise gradually decreased, and the company began to disperse. The labour of these children of the mountain makes them cheerful, yet moderate, and gives a zest first to their food, and afterwards to their repose. The earliest to leave was Simon the carrier; he went to the stable to seek his piebald horse and his couch of hay; pre-

sently the smith went his way over the bridge ; and thus one after another collected his goods and chattels and started off on the road,—and it was often a long one—that must be trod ere he could reach his home ; and before the moon, whose silvery light had long since glistened on the rocks opposite, had yet shone down upon the houses, only one guest was left, and that one did but wait for the letter which the Wanderer was writing in the upper-room that it might be taken to Priglitz the same night. At last the letter was ready ; its bearer disappeared under the shadow of that rocky wall, past which, in olden time, rode Julius in his hour of wrath, and the court of the Green Fichtau, before so animated a scene, was now dark and empty, save that one single night-lamp was still seen burning in the tap-room, where the Wanderer was paying the host his weekly reckoning, which, by mutual agreement, was never allowed to stand over Sunday.

“ And now, good night, master, and reckon better another time than to give me too much ; it is wrong to be careless of money or of fire—good night. Do you go to church to-morrow ? ”

“ Yes, certainly ; I shall drive one of your chestnuts to fetch Trini, if you have no objection.”

“ Not the least. I wish you a sound sleep.”

“ Good night.”

And at the end of half-an-hour the inn of the Green Fichtau was dark and still as the grave. However, amid the stillness of this night, another picture presented itself which we must describe.

The first sweet hours of rest began to fly past. It was stiller than ever, save that the waters flowing among the rocks behind, ceaselessly splashed and gurgled ; but their monotonous noise became at last like another kind of stillness, and thus came on that simple majesty of night which is so solemn and so soothing to the wearied spirit.

The moon shone perpendicularly over the group of houses, and threw its pale greyish light upon the plank-roofs, its glittering diamonds upon the torrent. In the garden, every leaf, every blade of grass, with the bright pearl within it, stood still, as if listening to the murmur of the river. And now a white, virgin-form glided along the garden-path, and behind her followed the host's great dog, tame and quiet as a lamb, the full bright moonlight streaming down upon both. The maiden seemed timid and irresolute ; she evidently moved slower the farther she advanced, and all at once she stood still and laid her gentle hand upon the shaggy neck of her companion, as if she were listening or trembling. Within the arbour close beside her, a

breath was held, either from happiness or suspense ; the dog shot in with a spring, and leaped familiarly upon the expectant.

“ Anna ! ” whispered a suppressed voice.

“ Heaven save me ! I am a wicked, disobedient child ! ”

“ No, thou art the sweetest, dearest creature in the whole wide earth. Anna, be not afraid of me.”

“ I am not afraid of you. I know that you are good, but it is wrong of me to come here ; and it is that which makes me afraid.”

“ It is not wrong, Anna.”

“ At all events it is not right ; but I came because you entreated me so earnestly, and because you need some one to be your friend.”

“ And, therefore, art thou my friend ; art thou not, Anna ? ”

“ I am, indeed, although at times it gives me great pain, because all is so secret ; and now, tell me why I must come to you in the garden so late at night ? ”

“ Do not ask, Anna ; see, it almost grieves me that thou shouldst ask. I have something of importance to tell thee ; but I will be candid and confess it,—it is not so much what I have to say, as the pleasure of seeing thee—it is such pleasure to take thy hand and feel that thou wouldst not wil-

lingly suffer me to take it, and yet wouldst not willingly draw it away ; to touch thy dress, to sit beside thee—even to feel thy breath seems to me the greatest happiness—and it is happiness to thee, too ; is it not ? ”

She made no answer, but the hand which he had taken she suffered him to retain ; she suffered him to draw her to the seat, and as the moon's ethereal silver pierced through the leafy trellis-work, and fell upon the countenances of both, her eye, meekly and tenderly fixed upon his, told him that it was so.

He drew her towards the seat, and she followed, though hesitatingly, because there was hardly room upon it for two persons. Trembling, hovering rather than sitting, she supported herself upon the little wooden bench. And thus the two sat together, and neither had courage to begin conversation. He sought about for a beginning and could not find it ; she felt his embarrassment, and yet for her life could not have brought out a word that would have relieved it. The third of their party looked at them as if he understood it all ; and it was almost laughable to see how he, although he loved them both, was in a manner jealous of both, and was continually labouring to excite notice by awkwardly thrusting his great uncouth head between them.

Anna, in the goodness of her heart, looked upon him kindly, and laid her hand upon his brow, feeling half-repentant because she had now withdrawn from him, and not from him only, but also from her father and mother, almost all her affections, in order to bestow them upon a stranger.

This stranger, however, now in a low, smothered voice, spoke as follows :—

“ If thou wouldst know, Anna, why I gave thee the letter and begged thee so urgently to come to-day to the harbour, I must tell thee, that something very important has occurred, which may possibly have great influence upon thy fate and my own ; but first, I must know something else, and, therefore, I ask thee if it be true, if it be possible, that thou canst love me as much as I love thee ? Thou art silent ! Anna, only tell me.”

“ Why else should I have come here ? ”

“ My sweet flower ! How strange it is that I should have wandered about the world so long, spending so many useless days, and should at last have come into this valley to seek for minerals and plants, and here have found thee, the loveliest, rarest flower of earth ! ”

“ Do not speak in that way,” answered Anna, “ for it is not so—only your own feelings tell you so, in reality it is very different. In the towns

beyond, there are so many noble young ladies, compared with whom I am poor and insignificant, like one of the slighted weeds which you have plucked in our valley, rejoicing over it for a few hours, as over others that you have collected."

"Thou canst not guess," returned he, vehemently, "my Alpine flower,—oh! if thou didst but know how far superior thou art to them,—no; perhaps, then, thou wouldst no longer be so superior—but let us leave this—only believe this one thing; that I love thee above every thing in this world, and that I will love thee to all eternity; but all this is only natural, and nothing at all wonderful. There is one thing, however, really wonderful, which I want to have explained, and that is, how it happened that thou shouldst take a fancy to me, whom everybody here looks upon with contempt, and in whom there is in truth nothing, except an unalterably kind heart."

"How I came to like you?"

"Nay, Anna, call me *thou*."

"No; do not interrupt me, I cannot do so; it seems to me as if it were not quite proper; and then I could not speak so freely and confidently."

"Well, then, at all events, speak freely and confidently."

"How I came to like you? Let me see. I

do not know how the feeling came ; when I remarked it, it was already there. I will tell you something of my childhood ; perhaps you may understand from that. My father always said that I was very pretty, and as I was his only child, he always made a great deal of me, and I and the smith's daughter, Katharina, were more nicely dressed than the neighbour's children throughout the Fichtau, therefore they quarrelled with us, and we were always obliged to walk alone ; however, we liked that best, and we used to sit together, upon the green heath, on the other side of the brook, over which my father had the covered bridge made for fear we should fall in ; there we used to sit together, and dig caves in the earth, or we gathered grasses and flowers, talked to the dragon-flies, and listened to old Plumi's stories."

"Who is Plumi ?"

"Oh ! Apollonia, Trini's old Swabian nurse, who lived with her because her mother died at her birth, and who went with her to the town when she married. She told us about Goldfischchen, who was kept a prisoner, and little Heuschreck who was as green as grass, and was obliged to wander for seven years through foreign lands, till he released himself and her from enchantment, and then he became a handsome Prince, and married the fair Princess Gold-

fischchen—and she told us of many other princes, dressed in velvet and silk, in velvet and red gold, so beautiful and noble—and then of singing-woods, and speaking stones—of the seven wise cocks—of the poor hen who died of thirst on the high Nuszberg—and of a thousand, thousand other things, every day something new, and every day something we had heard before. Only fancy, these stories so filled my mind that when thirteen weeks ago you entered our house, at first glance I fancied you must be some prince, because you looked so young and were laden with such strange things.—And when Trini and I grew older, my father gave me beautiful fable-books, and a room to myself with snow-white curtains, and window-ledges and tables of pretty red stone. He forbade me ever to go into the tap-room; and then a lady came to us from the town who taught us to read the fable-books, and to write pretty verses ourselves; unfortunately, that lady died too soon, but she left us some books which we used to read together—oh! there were such things in them, it seemed as if they would almost make my heart burst with pain and delight;—and then old Plumi crept out of her corner where she had hidden herself whilst the strange lady was with us, and told her stories again, and went with us over the mountains and into the deep forest, hunting for strawberries

or hazel-nuts, or flowers, and sometimes we found some growing in solitary places so large and so beautiful, that I think that they would have surprised you,—I don't think you have any like them in your great flower-books.—And when sometimes we went a long way, deep into the Grahnswiese, so deep that we could no longer hear the noise of the brook or the forge, or the saw-mills, and crouched down among the wild sloe-bushes, and she talked to us, and her coal-black eyes peered forth upon us from under her grey eye-brows; then I often felt half terrified every time a stone loosened itself from the rocks, and rolled down at our feet,—and it would not have surprised me at all if the old withered fir had begun to speak, and the rock to move, especially when every now and then those low, weeping tones were wafted through the air, when, as they said, the dead old Count Procopius was playing upon his harp in the star-tower—But I forget; what was it that I was to tell you?"

"How you came to like me so well."

"Ah! poor Trini had to marry the town-clerk; she did it willingly though, and was willing to go away with him, and Plumi went with her, and after that I was so dull that I cannot describe it to you—and then you came, and looked upon me so kindly, and often became so sad immediately afterwards that

it gave me at once pain and pleasure—Oh ! if you could ever be false, it would be dreadful.”

“ No, Anna, thou angel of innocence ! love me as long as this life shall last ; I can imagine and wish for no greater happiness than to be with thee. Thou art much better than I am—and when thou art my wife, and we shall always, always be together, then I will show thee the town :—but no, we will not go into a town at all. I will keep thee among flowers and trees, that thou mayest always remain as thou art now,—thou sweet, lovely — ! ”

“ Leave this, and listen a little longer to me,” said she, interrupting him. “ It was almost foolish how much I thought of you. The hens, and the flowers, and the doves, no longer gave me pleasure, I could not forget Trini, and she hardly came here so often as every Sunday. My father would not let me work, and I did nothing in the world but useless things, such as feeding the chickens, who looked upon me as their second mother, and watering the flowers, and making this arbour. And when, in my room, I had said my evening-prayers, and the wind fluttered the window-curtains to and fro, I felt so sad and lonely. The books that Trini sent me—tell me, did you ever shed tears over a book ? ”

“ Often, Anna ; often.”

“ Well, I thought that you had done so. And when you brought all those stones into our house, and talked Latin to them, and arranged the flowers so beautifully between the leaves of the great books, and often looked at them so long, then I thought— ‘ but they cannot love him in return ; for, with all their beauty, they are only senseless things : and who knows how far away his mother may be ? ’—And I thought you looked as if you must be so infinitely good and kind ; better even than Trini. And when they blamed you for spending your time so uselessly, I said to myself—‘ I know, though, why he does it ; ’ for as to the people here—they, you know, do not understand anything about flowers and stones. And when my father scolded about Trini’s books, and said there was nothing but nonsense in them, and I almost begun to believe it myself, then it seemed to me sometimes — ; but that is too silly.”

“ Now, Anna, go on.”

“ It often seemed to me as if you must have been in some such book, and had stepped out of it into our garden : and when you sat apart, covering your face with your hands as in sad thought, I fancied it was on my account.”

“ And so it was ; it was on thy account.”

“ Now do you not see ? And thus when I said

to myself, 'I will be his friend,' I was already so, more than any one can express; and I felt, too, that you must love me, unspeakably; that it could not be otherwise: I was as certain of it as if you had told me so yourself."

"And supposing it had not been so?"

"It must have been so, or all would have been out of nature. I do not know why the brook must flow into the Pernitz, but I know that it must."

"Oh! that heart! it boded true. The brook must flow into the river, and it is blessed in that it must. There it finds the end and aim of all its wanderings; what will come afterwards is uncertain: but one thing is certain—the brook and river must flow together. But see, that odious elder-bough hides thy forehead and thy sweet eyes. Bend thy head—so—a little nearer me. I should like to keep the moon spell-bound on that blue spot, that it might always shine down here, and always light up thy pure brow—thy loving and beautiful eyes!"

And he took her hand, pressed it upon his beating heart, upon his lips, upon his forehead. And her eye was still fixed upon him, full of shy, unconscious tenderness; and she said, with a voice trembling with emotion,—

"Since I have loved you so soon and so dearly, and have told you so, and have even come out

at night because you begged me so earnestly, you must not be false to me—you never must be false.”

“To nature, beloved one, we cannot be false. It is as natural for thee to love me as for the sun to shine, or for the measureless blue of ether to fill the heavens; thou turnest to me as the brook flows towards the river; as the butterfly unfolds its wings to the sun:—and to the bright-winged butterflies, to the brook, the sky, and the golden sunshine have I never been false! and to thee I could not be so, for all the riches of this earth! But, Anna, say, dost thou love me indeed so unspeakably, so beyond all measure, as I love thee? Speak, Anna, only speak!”

But she said nothing—not a syllable. The untaught heart that had never learnt to analyse its feelings, or to control them, was already completely vanquished in the conflict; and she could do no more than raise towards him a face radiant with affection, and press his hand in answer.

“Henry,” whispered she, “I should like to call thee *thou*.”

“Then call me so, dearest, call me so. And now, Anna, hear me: we love each other; that is sweet and delightful, but better must come. I shall take thee away from here; thou must be my wife, I thy husband; always together with me.

Parted from father and mother, and the whole world besides, thou must love what I love, share what I share, be where I am ; and I, on my part, will honour thee unto old age, will cherish thee as the pulse of my life, will love what thou lovest, and share all I have with thee ; and if one of us should die, the other must mourn, even to the grave. Anna, canst thou do all this ? ”

“ Yes ; how could I do otherwise ? And where will you take me ?—Oh ! it can never be ! My father will never consent, nor my mother either. You are so good ! but you do not as all other men do when they take a wife. They have houses and farms, or are like Trini’s town-clerk : but you wander over the mountains to collect stones and flowers.”

“ See, this is the fact : just as thou redest in thy books, I am destined to read in God’s book ; and the minerals and flowers, and the heavens and stars, are its characters. When thou art my wife thou wilt understand them, and I shall teach them thee.”

“ Oh, I understand them already, and always understood them. How wonderful is God’s book ! ”

“ Yes, thou jewel beyond all price, truly it is wonderful ! wonderful beyond measure ! Oh, I shall tell thee much more of that when we are united

for ever, and thou wilt marvel at the glory and beauty of the things with which the whole earth is filled. But now, Anna, I will tell thee something else ; attend and ponder it over in thy wise head. It is that for which I begged thee to come into the garden, and concerns thy father and mother. When, yesterday afternoon, I was sitting about three miles from here under the shade of the maple-trees, thinking over all this, it occurred to me that I would immediately go away and win station and office. I have friends who would help me ; and afterwards I should come again and speak to thy father, and he would let thee go. True, I have already, a long way off, a garden, and house, and fields, all my own, sufficient to support me and mine, my dear mother and a sister, who is nearly as good as thou art—they both live with me ;—but all that would be far too little in thy father's eyes ; and, therefore, Anna, I asked thee to come into the garden that I might tell thee that I am now going away, but shall soon return to fetch thee, and that thou must trust me and wait for me. Meantime, however, something else has happened—no, it is too fabulous : I cannot allow myself to believe it. Be not startled ; it is nothing wrong. I can confide it to no living creature save to thee, my sweet innocence, but thou must not betray it.”

“No, pray do not tell me, perhaps I should betray it, and I believe in thee without knowing it ; so tell it first to my father, when it is certain that I must be your wife ; it is very hard that I must make a secret of my love to you. Only fancy, lately I whispered into Philax’ ear, ‘ I love him from my heart, from my heart, from my heart !’—but may I not tell it to Trini to-morrow ?”

“If thou lovest me—”

“Well, I will say nothing even to her. If you do not stay away too long, I shall be able to endure it.”

“True, faithful heart,” said he after a pause, “how shall I be worthy of thee !” His voice faltered ; and if his face had not been in the shade, she would have seen that there were tears in his eyes. She saw it not ; but as she guessed from his silence that something grieved him, she took his hand between her own and pressed it warmly and fondly.

And as they sat thus, the glorious night silent around them, and minute after minute passed away without the heart’s taking note of it, suddenly the cock, the trumpet of the morning, the herald who announces to us that night is past, and a new day has dawned, crew loud and clear. Anna sprang up :—

"Oh, see, the moon is so low that it shines in at the arbour's entrance, and the sky grows light. I must go back to the house—do not keep me : fare you well !"

He rose. "Another minute, Anna, another second!—give me but one kiss—speak again, but do not say *you*."

"Well, then, *thou*. Fare thee well, my own, my beloved ; and come back soon and say the right word to father."

"And in the days I have yet to stay here—wilt thou not come again to the arbour, Anna ?"

"No, Henry, it is not right ; I will look kindly at you during the day, even though my father may seem surprised or angry ; but I cannot come here again—it is not right. I must go !"

"Farewell !" said he, "thou good and faithful heart, good night !"

"Good night," said she, and vanished among the trees.

He was alone.

More freshly, as if to greet the coming day, rustled the waters of the Pernitz, and a brisk morning gale began to stir and ruffle the leaves of the trees ; but the Wanderer went on farther into the garden, sprang over the enclosure, and strode hastily away over the moon-lit hillocks to the forest,

as if it were not possible for him in this hour to take either sleep or rest. The night-stillness remained henceforth undisturbed, and nothing was in motion save the ever-murmuring waters and the twinkling stars above.

CHAPTER II.

THE RUINS.

THERE was lowing and bleating, and joyous ringing of bells, as on that bright Sunday morning the sun ascended in splendour, the mist arose from the valleys, and the herds again went up to their mountain pastures. But Gregory, the herdsman, stayed behind, and, dressed in his stiff holiday attire, stood sunning himself in the road; none but the grey shepherd's dog, in his everlasting work-day coat, and the herdsman's son in his, accompanied the cattle—the one joyfully shaking his neck-collar, and the other lustily shouldering his staff: they were the only two creatures that need work this day; all others might enjoy the repose of the festival. Old Simon, the carrier, too, having shaved his week-day beard, an inch in length, was already standing in the road with shining face, and still more shining jacket; he was looking about him and enjoying right heartily the luxury of that one holyday in the week, when

he was not obliged to go anywhere but to church, and there he always went gladly and with real devotion. His pipe was already filled, and upon his hat was stuck a whole bush of mountain-feathers, together with a goat's beard like a gigantic fan. The warm Sunday sun was already high in the heavens, casting its myriads of glorious beams into the valley. The mountains were glittering with dew, and the Pernitz rolled waves like molten gold and silver along its rocky shores. All the houses were filled with Sunday pomp and bustle; and the wooded heights around were alive with the mingled screaming and singing of the birds, who seemed possessed with a positive fever of excitement.

In the upper story of the Green Fichtau a window opened, and the Wanderer's countenance looked forth, his hair waved back from his open forehead, and his eyes turned inquiringly upon the sky and the weather;—both were found satisfactory, and he was just withdrawing his head from the window, when father Erasmus strode forth from the house, arrayed in his clean linen and Sunday coat, but with his work-day jacket thrown over them, and his work-day cap upon his head.

“Good morning, Simon!” cried he. “Good morning!—A fine day this; a capital day for the flax?”

"At Asang it is in blossom already, like a blue sea," was Simon's rejoinder.

"I have told him he may harness the best chestnut," said the host, turning towards the garden-gate; "for that horse is quieter than the other; but I'll tell thee what, Anna, don't let thyself be fooled into driving with him, if he should ask thee: that romancing young fellow will be sure to drive himself and thee too into a ditch. Bide with me, Anna, who knows how soon some one may come and carry thee away for ever and always."

Anna, who was gathering roses and other flowers in the garden, at this moment appeared at the gate, and said, raising her dark eyes to her father's face,—

"Oh, he will not ask me; and that other person you spoke of will not come at all, dear father."

She was so lovely in her morning attire. Although abroad she dressed like the rest of her countrywomen, at home her apparel was fashioned after her own fantastic invention; and father Erasmus, once a connoisseur in female beauty, and by no means the last to admire it in his daughter, looked uncommonly roguish as he replied,—

"Nay, nay, thou little fool! he will not fail; but remember when he does come,—a most remarkable bridegroom he must be, or I will not let thee go,—a perfect prince of a bridegroom must he be."

“But if I cannot go away willingly, very willingly,” replied she, confidently, “then, father, no one shall ever take me away from the dear beautiful Fichtau—is it not so?”

And as she again raised those clear, unconscious eyes towards her father, he, who doted upon her, felt penetrated with such inordinate joy and pride, that he broke forth, saying,—

“To be sure not,—nay, I tell thee, if thou dost not have such good fortune as shall make thee tremble over thine own happiness, thou shalt not leave the house. Such a happy fate must be thine that all the whole Fichtau shall hold up their hands in wonder.”

At these words a crimson, deep and beautiful as the roses in her hand, flushed Anna's face; her eye-lids fell heavily over her gentle eyes, and she immediately went back to the garden. She stepped in front of an elder-bush, cut nothing from it, but stood still looking at it. Meantime from the chamber above, another had been listening, and now pressed his hand violently against his forehead. But the two unsuspecting old men remained in the court and talked on.

“You have made a very foolish, wanton speech, Erasmus,” said Simon, the carrier. “If you will insist upon your daughter having such an unlikely

stroke of good fortune as is out of the nature of things, beware lest God should punish you by making her unhappy."

"Not so bad as you think," returned mine host of the Fichtau; "let her husband be but a proper man, no coxcomb like the town-clerk, whom neighbour Smith is always prating about, but a frank honest fellow; one who is quick at his business, good-looking, young, and friendly, and who will just pet her a little, because Anna is used to be petted. He must have some money, and then Anna will bring the rest; for my only child will not leave the Green Fichtau empty-handed. And does she not deserve it? Say, Simon, is she not such a creature that it is a positive shame that I should be her father?—She has not got my head, the more the pity; she thinks too much of folly and nonsense: she has all that from her mother."

"Yes, yes," said Simon; "she is grown wonderfully; for the last year I have hardly ventured to speak familiarly to her, though such an old acquaintance; however, I shall always think you have brought her up too much above her station."

"And she is above her station," replied the host, "and she shall be above her station; and, therefore, I have never suffered her to set her foot in the tap-room, or meddle with household matters;

and it is all right. I must now look to the carriage. Good b'ye."

"He is a fool," thought Simon the carrier, as he went on smoking his pipe.

Meanwhile there were assembling in the court of the Green Fichtau a number of those mountain-carriages in which the wealthier classes are accustomed, on Sundays and holidays, to drive to church. A few foot-passengers had joined them.

The houses and farms of the mountain-dwellers being scattered here and there about the various heights, and mostly several leagues distant from Priglititz, the custom had arisen to rest a little while at the Green Fichtau, where they chatted together and took a second breakfast.

And thus it happened to-day. There were visitors both in the house and in the court ; and Simon, the messenger, was soon surrounded by several groups, gossiping now with one, now with another.

While this was going on, the apartment of the naturalist, on the upper story, was pleasantly lighted by the morning sun, whose beams fell cheerily upon the stones and minerals which lay sparkling around, and upon withered plants, whose dry and lifeless remains could no longer feel the kindly light and warmth streaming in through the window, and which formerly, on their own free mountains, had

been so grateful to them. The Wanderer walked up and down among his treasures, rapt in meditation.

When, a few weeks ago, he had entered this lovely valley, abounding with luxuriant plants and bright minerals, he had found a treasure he thought not of—a beautiful girl. And how was it now? The days had passed over his head so rapidly, so pleasantly, they brought nothing new; nothing new was desired; and now that he saw Anna standing so still, so thoughtful, so gentle, such an excess of affection and pity swelled his heart that he knew not how to contain himself. He could not trust himself to return to the window to look at her again; for he feared to see her still standing pensively at the elder-bush.

Just then he heard the host's voice down in the court, "Ah! there thou art, with a whole pack of flowers and things stolen from the garden, looking like our botanist, when he is dragging home a quantity of grass from the mountains."

The Wanderer stepped to the window.

"Dear father," said Anna, "I only want to take a large bouquet to the town for Trini, because they have no flowers in those great, terrible stone houses. And I have learned how to arrange them well and tastefully from our guest, for he under-

stands flowers much better than you or I, or all the people in the Fichtau Valley taken together. He says there is a wonderful life within them, and I believe it—perhaps they possess souls also, dear, precious souls. I suppose he knows why he can take so much pleasure in them.”

“ Yes, yes, to be sure, lives, and souls, and catkins besides, for aught I know,” replied the host ; “ only take care to be ready and dressed for church ; we shall start exactly half-an-hour hence.”

Anna went into the house ; and only to Henry’s acute ear her light step on the stairs was audible, as she carried the flowers up to her room.

At the end of half-an-hour, as had been foretold, the sleek, slender, chestnut horses were ready harnessed each to his carriage, but the women, as might also have been foretold, were not ready. Erasmus walked restlessly up and down, attired in his Sunday suit. Simon, the carrier, had seized hold of a stick of gigantic length, intending to walk to church ; for his pie-bald steed must have rest on Sundays. The smith, ridiculously dressed out, was sitting in his carriage, with a flaming red covering spread over the seat and the trappings of the horses, in order to receive the town-clerk with honour due. And the Wanderer, too, was standing there waiting, and so well-dressed that he really looked like an orderly,

reasonable human being; when behold, Anna and her mother were seen descending the garden-steps.

The mother, a handsome middle-aged woman, with a countenance superior to most of her countrywomen, wore the usual holyday garb of the wealthier mountaineers, but everything composed of better materials and arranged with better taste, for Erasmus loved to show the fruits of his good management in the appearance of his family. Anna was dressed like other maidens of the valley; but any one who had seen her, as she moved gracefully across the court to the carriage, might have imagined that she came from another and far distant land, and wore a dress which she had invented herself, so well did it become her. The costumes of the Fichtau are, however, notoriously the most picturesque in the whole mountain-district. As she passed Henry, a deep blush overspread her face, and, faithful to her promise, she turned her eyes towards him with such an expression of fervent, true-hearted affection that every one might have guessed how matters stood, had they had eyes for anything but their own convenience.

The naturalist, with his usual good-nature, invited Simon, the carrier, to drive with him, which proposal was accepted, although with evident hesitation and mistrust; indeed, Simon seemed intent

upon some plan for securing the reins to himself, lest any accident should occur; however, to the astonishment of most of the party, the Wanderer drove off before their eyes so cleverly, and darted so quickly past the stone-wall down the road, that father Erasmus, who prided himself on his chestnuts, felt his heart dance with exultation, and now began to entertain sentiments somewhat more respectful towards his eccentric guest. His own carriage, containing Anna and her mother, followed next in order, then the smith's, and then those of the others.

When the narrow romantic road winding beside the Pernitz had been left behind, and the travellers, suddenly emerging into a broad valley, were greeted by the slender, pointed tower of Priglitz, another carriage drove quickly to meet them, wherein sat the town-clerk with his young wife, eager to welcome the church-goers.

"Hail to thee, Henry," cried the former; "thou dearest of all vagabonds, hail!"

"God greet thee, Robert," was the answer; "it is a magnificent valley, this Fichtau!"

"Did I not tell thee so?" returned Robert; "did I not tell thee so, and yet thou never wouldst come?"

They shook hands across the carriages. In the

meantime Katrina had sprung down from her seat and Anna from hers, and they embraced in the open road, as though they would have pressed each other to death. Katrina might well be called "the snow-white Trini;" for her dress was entirely white, and the little matronly cap that shaded her fair young face might be compared to one of the bright snow-like clouds that sail lightly over the noon-day sky of a hot midsummer-day. And now, disentangling herself from Anna's embrace, she looked closely and affectionately at her, and could not sufficiently wonder how her friend could have grown so much lovelier in so short a time—truly she could not guess what sun of light and life had suddenly arisen to call this opening rose-bud into fulness of bloom and beauty.

Anna took out of the carriage the huge bouquet of flowers, which, in her hurry, she had thrown aside, and gave it to Trini. "Thou must untie it at home," said she, "for the poor stalks have been hurt by the string; and then thou must put them, arranged as they are, into the flower-vase."

"God greet you, honoured father-in-law!" cried Robert to the smith; "after service we will all drive merrily together to the Fichtau."

"Much obliged, my son, much obliged," replied the smith, and presently all were prepared to

continue the drive to Priglitz. Anna was again sitting with her father and mother, Trini with her husband, while Henry drove on with Simon so quickly that the feathers and chamois-beard adorning the hat of the latter, waved and rustled in the wind, threatening each minute to fly off.

They arrived at Robert's house, where the carriages of the smith and the inn-keeper were always left to wait; each arranged his dress, a few words were exchanged, and then all went into church.

After service, as usual, every one took a glass of wine at Robert's house. Trini and Anna ran through all the rooms, tarrying longest in the back-room with Trini's little child. "What a dear, pretty, silly little thing it is!" said Anna, as she stroked the infant's tiny, unconscious cheeks. Meantime, the smith was reposing in the chair of honour, in the state-apartment, Anna's mother was taking refreshment, Erasmus was talking over important business with the Priglitz inn-keeper, and the friends Henry and Robert retired for a few minutes into a window-recess, as if arranging some plan.

At length the whole party had re-united. Trini was dressed, had taken leave of her child, and all started off for the Green Fichtau.

But, gladly as our pen would linger over the

pleasant, free, careless life of that sweet valley, we must now turn away from it. The object of our pages carries us away from this happy and guileless present, which otherwise we should far prefer picturing, to a dark and gloomy past, which, gathered mostly from the fragmentary traditions of old and mute walls, it is our task to describe as best we can, and best will be but obscure and defective—we promise, however, in the end, to link it with the present, and thus to bring to view a picture, dusky, gloomy, and half-effaced by age, set within a bright and shining frame.

Henry had received a promise from Robert that he would endeavour to procure for him entrance into the ancient Castle of Rothenstein, and that he would communicate to him the result of his endeavours in a letter, which should appoint place and time for meeting.

But before we accompany them to the mountain and the said castle, it is permitted us to cast one last lingering look into the valley of the Fichtau, and to inform our readers that father Erasmus' trouts were pronounced most excellent; that Trini, Anna, Robert, and the Wanderer dined with the smith, in his garden; that after dinner there was a delightful shooting-match, that a numerous company of pleasant and merry-hearted guests met at the Green

Fichtau ; that Anna, once in the course of the evening, suddenly threw herself upon the snow-white Trini's neck, without any apparent reason ; and finally, that the towns-folk did not start homewards till all the stars were bright in heaven. And then, all the lights in the Green Fichtau being extinguished, the moon rose silently over the mountains, and looked down upon the garden, as if seeking that sweet, whispering, stolen bliss she had shone upon the previous evening ; but in vain, arbour and garden were empty, and the whole night long she looked upon nothing save the glittering dew-drops among the grass, and the silver ripple of the waters.

That happy Sunday was succeeded by a laborious week ; Simon and his pie-bald steed traversed the wide country round, the saw-mills continued their screeching, the forge its hammering ; Erasmus bustled about and arranged his house-keeping matters, Anna passed to and fro, or stood musing as she was wont to do. And she kept her word faithfully, both in respect to the friendly glances she had promised, and her steady refusal ever again to be alone with Henry. He saw her only from a distance, occasionally catching a glimpse of her beloved form among the bushes of the garden.

Thus time passed away. The flax-blossoms at

Asang wore a deeper blue, the days became more and more bright, and at last Saturday came round again, and with it Simon and the pie-bald steed, and also the letter from Robert. After the Wanderer had read it, he paid father Erasmus his weekly account, saying that to-day he could not wait for the arrival of the mountaineers, the huntsmen, and other Saturday guests, but that he must go immediately to Priglitz, and would spend the night with Robert, that he should probably return in a few days, and that meantime his goods might be left locked up in his chamber.

And now we must take leave of the Fichtau. Henry did not start till late in the evening; he passed the stone wall, and soon left behind him the dear old inn with all its ready-kindled lights, its joyous Saturday guests, and the pleasant music of its guitars. The murmuring Pernitz alone accompanied the Wanderer, and it prattled and tattled to him all through the darkness, till they both came out into the level plain, in sight of the walls of Priglitz.

The next day was Sunday; on the last we went with the mountain-dwellers to church; but to-day we shall join the two friends, Robert and Henry, when, before the sun-beams had become oppressively hot, they ascended the fatal mountain, on which the

Castle of Rothenstein was built. The level part of their road they had passed in a carriage. At the foot of the mountain an avenue of ancient fir-trees received and guided them upwards. The cool morning air sighed mournfully among the branches, and the higher they advanced, the deeper and more oppressive grew the silence that reigned around. At last they reached a grey wall of unusual height, and at the end of the avenue which formed the carriage-road was seen the white speck of the gates which had been plastered up, and above which frowned the defaced fragments of an ancient coat of arms. Robert dived under the brushwood that had thickly overgrown the spot, and pressing a projecting iron knob, the shrill sound of a bell was heard from the interior; soon, however, the vibrating tones of the metal ceased, and then all was silent as before, save that a chirping noise, as if proceeding from a whole chorus of grasshoppers, rose upon the mountain.

In vain did Robert vociferate, "Ho ! Hollo ! it is I, the syndic, whom you promised to let in." No answer followed. But on accidentally looking upwards, Henry saw a head peering forth over the edge of the wall ; the face and hair both as grey as the antique masonry that supported it, while the eyes stared fixedly upon the two men below. After

a while the head vanished, and presently a strange groaning and creaking was heard among the walls, and, to the astonishment of the Wanderer, they parted asunder, and the narrow opening of a portal became visible, wherein, as in a frame, stood a tall figure, bearing the same hard grey features which Henry had observed staring at them from the wall. There was, however, this difference, that the face was now lighted up by a strange, faint smile, like a solitary sun-beam making its way over rocky scenery, on a dreary day in autumn.—“Go directly into the green hall,” said the figure.

“I greet thee, Ruprecht,” said Robert, “show us the green hall and all the rest, if it please thee.”

Without making any answer, the man shrunk back. They entered, and at that same moment a singularly sweet, deep, and powerful strain thrilled through the air above them.

“It is only the instrument of Procopius,” said the old man; “step in, noble sir, and enter the abode of the ancient race;” and with these words he bowed low towards several places, and then closed the opening which had admitted them.

The friends were now standing within the walls, not, however, in the ordinary court of a castle or anything resembling it; they were still in the free air, with the mountain rising gently before them.

It was a broad, wide polygon on which they now stood, paved with free-stones, the high grass growing between, and the hot summer-sun shining down upon them. Two black sphinxes lay in the centre of the court, their huge stone eye-balls glaring upon the dried-up basin of a fountain placed between them, as if under their guardianship. But no water had streamed from the spouts for long, long years; the wind had half filled the basin with sand, grass and dry weeds had sprouted out from the cornices, and bright little lizards frolicked over the stony forms of the sphynxes.

Farther behind this group stood an obelisk, but its point was lying at the base.

“Count Johannes has been dead three or four hundred years,” said Ruprecht.

On one side of this place the friends saw a little building, probably the porter's lodge; of the castle itself nothing could be seen besides the grey roof-work frowning above the green of the mountain, and inhabited by a whole colony of busy, twittering swallows. They now ascended the long untrodden path. Here, ever and anon, their progress was retarded by pieces of detached masonry, broken from the roof, and by luxuriant creeping-plants whose undisciplined tendrils trailed thickly over the ground in wild disorder; especially noticeable was the wild

vine, whose fresh light-green leaves contrasted strongly with the red blocks of marble between which they wound their way; and as the friends scrambled through this wilderness, many a bird sprang with a loud scream from its leafy bower at their feet, and soared high into the radiant blue of heaven.

They met no one. The slope of the mountain which they were ascending seemed to have been formerly a park. Hares fled by them; butterflies and insects of different species filled the air with their humming and buzzing; a group of lime-trees which they passed, swarmed with bees in every branch, but not a human-creature was visible. When they were about half-way up the hill, a bull-dog of the largest breed joined them and quietly followed Ruprecht.

"We have watched and guarded everything," said the old man, "and the dog has been of great service, because he is feared by all the country far and near. Within the 'Sixtus building,' around which are the cells of the nuns, everything is dropping with honey; for I never took any away, and the wine too has been undisturbed. There is a way leading from the cloisters to the cellars, but I would not open it to the lawyers when they came here and wanted to overlook everything, so they know nothing

of the wine. But do you go into the green saloon, noble sir, there you shall see how cleverly the old man has cheated them."

Henry looked at Robert with astonishment, but the latter merely replied, casting a keen glance at their guide, "Thou art in one of thy queer humours, old rusty!"

The old man was silent immediately and looked at the syndic with an air of embarrassment while a faint colour passed over his petrified features, as if he were ashamed; henceforth he held his peace.

They had at length reached the verge of the mountain, and Henry now perceived that on the other side lay an assemblage of buildings, sloping down into a winding valley. Everything was wilder and on a larger scale than he could have imagined. A whole race must for centuries have dwelt, built, and planted upon this mountain. Separate edifices, like independent castles, rose upon different points connected by low walls and parapets; the grace and symmetry of Grecian pillars were displayed on one side; a pointed tower projected from a gable of red rock on another; here stood a picturesque ruin embosomed in an oak-grove, and at some distance, on a separate neck of land, gleamed the glaring white edifice of more modern times. And these varieties of buildings,

gardens, and woods, were all comprehended within the same high, thick, grey wall through which they had been admitted, and round which Henry had clambered, labouring to find an entrance, on the day when he first discovered the castle. Like an iron frontlet it enclosed the wide mountain, and cut off its heights from the rest of the world.

There they stood, and Robert did his best to explain all he could explain; for he was only slightly acquainted with the castle, or Ruprecht, and his knowledge of them was only the result of the official duties that had devolved upon him since the death of the last proprietor.

The Grecian structure had been erected by the Count Jodok referred to by father Erasmus. Its slender white columns embosomed within thick brushwood and graceful creepers, gave the idea of an Ionic garden, softly smiling amid monuments of barbaric magnificence. At some distance and in striking contrast, stood the tower of Procopius, Gothic and indented in form, the rock on which it was planted projecting above a fir-grove, which, half eaten away by insects, looked like white trellis-work. Behind, upon a wide, smooth plain, lay the aforesaid Sixtus-building; broad, lead-coloured, massive, totally devoid of ornament, and with green

copper-roofs still in perfect preservation. The windows had no ledges or recesses, and were set in the solid stone walls, flat and smooth as pieces of mica in granite. The modern buildings on the promontory were those erected by Count Christopher, the last proprietor. Long terraces and garden-walks separated them from those before described, and surrounded them on all sides ; arbours and summer-houses were scattered here and there in mingled good and bad taste, but all were fast falling into decay. Hence could be overlooked the ruin in the oak-grove, a fabric crowded with balconies, gable-ends and bow-windows ; this had been the mansion of old Count Julian. Herds of fallow deer were seen grazing and wandering to and fro among the stately, giant-armed oaks which thronged the space between the modern erections and the ruin.

“ This is most glorious ! ” cried Henry ; “ who could have imagined that there was room enough upon this mountain for such a multitude of different buildings, and with the loveliest scenery lying around and among them. It is to me quite like a wondrous old legend ; and I can hardly believe it possible that the Fichtau, where I was yesterday, can be still lying beneath us. Come, let us mount on the uppermost point of this promontory ; it must com-

mand a beautiful prospect ; and before we creep into all these corners and crevices, we will just take a survey of the country, and see if it be really the same as it was yesterday."

And they advanced towards this point, which was the highest peak of the whole mountain. Here its sides sloped down straight and smooth ; and on looking dizzily over the wall, a declivity of nearly a hundred fathoms, stretching perpendicularly down into the valley, met their glance. This peak, likewise, had its building ; but it was merely a covered length of columns, between which glass could be inserted during the winter, and containing long benches hewn out of the red marble peculiar to the country, which benches were placed close to the columns.

The country was indeed the same as it was yesterday,—wrapped in the balmy atmosphere of a summer's-noon lay the whole district of the Fichtau, green and peaceful as ever—an extent of gently-rising hills and mountains, stretching into the faint-blue of the distant horizon, the glittering thread of the Pernitz winding itself amongst them ;—it was a well-known, familiar scene ; a sweet happy Present, encircling the dark and troubled Past, amid the relics of which they were now standing. Of the hostel of the Green Fichtau and the houses grouped,

beside it, nothing whatever was visible ; only the Mount-Grahn reared up its reddish-grey summit into the thick hazy atmosphere ; and Henry's eye rested gladly upon it, because it reminded him of the dear gentle heart beneath, perhaps, in that very moment, engaged with thoughts of him, the absent friend.

The two young men said but a few words to express their pleasure, and point out to each other the various mountain-heights, whilst their guide stood mute and motionless behind them, save that the breeze playing round the mountain-peak waved to and fro the scattered locks upon the old man's temples ; for, unobserved by either, he had remained bare-headed.

At another time they would have lingered to contemplate the pleasant scene at their feet ; but to-day there were other objects of more immediate interest. Henry proposed entering the new buildings first, as they were nearest ; but Robert showed him that this was impossible, since, when Count Christopher rode off to the African wars, he had sealed up the gates, and ordered that nothing should be touched before his return ; and that in case of his death, the next heir should open them first on the day of taking possession. So the green silk curtains still hung heavily behind the wide plate-glass windows, and

not a single fold had been disturbed. The seals, green also, and impressed with the Scharnast arms, were fastened upon all the gates and doors. The wind had in many places torn away the tiles from the roof, and with them bits of the lath and plaster to which they were attached: so that naked spars and rafters projected into the air with a ridiculous appearance. The old man, however, surveyed all with an air of quiet confident satisfaction, as if everything were in the best possible order. The gravel before the grand entrance had been washed away by the rain, and not a trace of hoofs or wheels remained.

"And how long is it since thy last lord went away?" inquired Robert.

"After the time of the great pestilence,"—began the old man slowly, shyly, and almost distrustfully, as he approached them nearer,—but Robert interrupted him, saying "Put on thy cap."

"Yes, the sun is hot," replied Ruprecht, "it is hot, I had forgotten that, and a fur-cap is as good a protection against heat as against cold."

And the friends now perceived that his cap, which he had hitherto held in his hand, was, notwithstanding the summer-heat, made of fur-skin.

"Well then, now tell us," repeated Robert, "how long has this house been without a master?"

"After the great pestilence," resumed the old

man, "which raged in all the country round—no, it must have been *before* the pestilence, for Narcissa died of it, she had it so badly; but properly her name was not Narcissa, but Tiburtia; it was because she was so tall and slender and beautiful, and carried her head slightly drooping, that he always called her Narcissa. The Lord forgive him! he had a stormy temper, though he was sometimes as gentle as a child; I have seen him weep as if his heart would break;—and so he had all the green curtains drawn down, and then he sealed up all the doors and rode away; for look you, he was as haughty as Count Julius, who went away too and never came back again. The day before he went he had the carriage-gates walled up, and the others besides; and all the servants and huntsmen, and the dogs and the horses were sent off that same day, and he said to me, "take care of the old place, as the apple of thine eye, and keep the rabble away from it till I come back and acknowledge her as my wife." And I have taken care of the place, so that none but the birds of the air have dared fly in. There has been such silence, Count Sixtus, such silence both in sunshine and moonshine—always silence, except when the strange instrument of that old dead Procopius, which he had replaced in the tower, used sometimes to send forth its melancholy tones.

Thus passed five, six, eight years, and then the lawyers came with their parchments and opened and looked into everything, and sealed them up again—this syndic, who is with you, was among them,—and they said that he had been buried so sumptuously in the heathen's land. And Narcissa lies in the castle-chapel; the Dean himself came over and said, 'I will give her my blessing before she dies.' She could not wait for the Count any longer—her heart had stood still."

He had addressed this long rambling speech mostly to Henry, who listened kindly and in silence. Meantime they had advanced through the oak-grove, and on stepping out on the bright green sward, whereon lay scattered the ruins of Count Julian's abode, Ruprecht's great dog suddenly bounded forwards, wagging his tail and barking as if highly delighted. But Ruprecht exclaimed, "Oh! thou wilt fall down, Pia, thou fearful child!—Pia! Pia!—here, my darling, here, come down quickly. I told thee to sit still amongst the marigolds, and count how many times the swallow flew by."

And a low, sweet, silvery voice rung through the air, "She flew five times and twenty times—and as to the marigolds, the first is yellow, and the second yellow, and they are all yellow. I shall not fall, look at me, I shall not fall!"

The friends looked upwards, and on the topmost balcony of the ruined castle—a balcony apparently hung in the air, poised upon a single stone,—they beheld a child, half sitting, half riding on the balustrades; it seemed to be a girl ten or twelve years old, possibly younger, a profusion of the loveliest golden ringlets waving round her neck and glowing little face. And there she sat and shouted, and after Ruprecht had called to her, and her own voice had rung forth the answer, she became wilder than before; she stood up on the narrow and almost invisible bridge of the railing, hovered backwards and forwards, and bowed and nodded till the gazers below became dizzy with terror and apprehension.

Then she cried to the dog, “Huon, Huon, come up here!” And when the dog bounded along and sprang into the air, and gave vent to strange incoherent sounds of rejoicing, she knew not what to do for laughing.

“I shall tear off my hair, if some day the dog should drag her shattered limbs home; for he loves her and follows her everywhere.” These words the old man had spoken in an under-tone to himself,—his two companions, however, overheard them.

Meanwhile the child threw up her arms, exclaiming, “I see here, and I see there, I can see all the walls, all the trees, and the whole world.”

Her light dress seemed to hang like a summer-cloud in the blue heavens—the men stood motionless, fearing to startle her—at last she vanished from her height, descended from the balcony, slid down the wall, and almost in the same minute was seen upon the turf as she crept out from a gap in some raspberry-bushes. Suddenly she stood still, as if perceiving the strangers for the first time, stared at them awhile with her large black eyes, and then passed slowly round the corner of the building, shy and wild as a young panther. But presently she began to run over the lawn, the dog behind her, and soon the friends perceived her, throwing both her arms around the great creature, and rushing on with him through long grass and bushes, till both were out of sight, and only the bushes were seen waving behind them.

“We will wall up that hole, noble sir,” said Ruprecht, in a low whisper, pointing to it, fear and a deadly pallor overspreading his features; “there are tiles in the Parthenon—and there is no other use for them.”

Then he went on, as if forgetting his companions. “The ravens of the Grahn will fly over my cottage, and bring me word why she has not come home for whole days together—she will be lying on a red stone—dead; the greedy vultures will peck out her

eyes,—or the waters of the Pernitz will flow over her delicate limbs, and the fishes dart past them and struggle for the morsel that one has snatched away. I, meantime, shall seek, seek, always, always—and then I shall cry and howl to the terrible heavens above, till all the stars shall tremble at hearing me ; for she is the loveliest creature on the earth, the loveliest creature that sun and stars shine on, as Narcissa was.” He now shot a strange, shy glance towards Henry, saying, “ I will open, sir, for I keep everything bolted and barred.”

And he turned the great keys in the doors—although there was nothing to be locked ; for the walls were full of gaps, a broad staircase led up to heaps of rubbish, the air streamed in through all the windows, wainscoting and brickwork had long since disappeared, the marble floor of the saloons was buried in dust, stone steps were hanging in the air, mortar crumbling to pieces and rattling down on every side, and luxuriant plants and weeds sprang up wherever the air pierced in, or the sunbeams kissed the broken walls. Over one of these hanging, sloping staircases must the little girl have clambered up to the high balcony.

After making their way over heaps of stone and mortar, and creeping through gaps and doorways, without having met with anything worthy of remark,

they desired to be let out, and the old man led them through another door, which he likewise locked carefully behind them, into the garden belonging to the house. It formed a long quadrangle, shut in behind by a huge rock of marble, light airy galleries raised a little above the ground bounding the other two sides.

If it were possible for a wood or garden to be a ruin, this would have been one. Here were seen flower-beds sunk deep in the mould—shattered vases buried in the grass—a joyous wilderness of weeds—one fruit-tree withered away, another reduced to a mere stump, with two solitary green shoots still springing out of it—a third covered with beautiful fruit left to decay on the boughs—the cherry trees, trained over the walls, once the glory and pride of their owner, hanging down, untended and barren, like miserable willow-twigs—tall elms, shooting upwards and stretching their leafy branches boldly into the galleries—bees and dragon-flies buzzing and carrying on their labours among the wild blossoms of the weeds which choked up the place. Through the midst of all this ran a broad path, looking as if it were daily trod, or had only been made yesterday. Henry had also remarked, within the ruin, a trodden path leading over the rubbish-heaps from one door to the

other. They passed along the garden. As they came nearer, the Red Rock grew larger and larger, and Henry at last perceived that a high portal was hewn in it, barred up with an iron gate, to which iron keys were suspended, sealed with the family seals and likewise with those of the court officials. This rock was in fact the Red Stone already described, wherein the autobiographies of the Scharnast family were preserved, and of which Henry had heard from Robert. Near the Red Stone was the cemetery of the castle. Another gate, neither massive nor sealed, but a broad, high, iron grating, led into it. This cemetery was likewise a kind of garden, but, instead of flowers, nothing but dark, waving grass grew therein; instead of an obelisk stood a white crucifix, surrounded by four lime-trees; and instead of a summer-house, a chapel, shaded by the oak trees that grew outside in Julian's grove.

"The books that are kept in the vaults of this red rock," said Ruprecht, "refer only to people who are descended from the blood of our counts; every drop which their hearts have bled for the last seven hundred years is noted therein, and no one may read the manuscripts who is not a child of the same race. You see that the gates to the rock are sealed up, you cannot get in there, but I have the keys to all the others."

And he closed the grating, and led them through an avenue of lime-trees into the burial-place. It was the most silent and solemn spot that Henry had yet seen upon the mountain ; it seemed to invite peace and repose, and was enclosed on three sides by Julian's oak-grove, so that scarcely a breath of air, scarcely a sound could enter ; on the fourth side stood the old castle and the lime-trees with their mingled hues of grey and green, and above it was spread the deep blue canopy of heaven, blended with the liquid gold of the sunbeams. Nor was there seen here that thronging superfluity of elaborately worked crosses and monuments whereby the impressive simplicity of the garden of death is so often destroyed, men thus carrying their miserable love of pomp and glitter even to the grave ; here the smooth turf was scattered with only a few unpretending memorials, marking the resting-places of faithful servants of the house, and in the centre stood one tall cross of white marble, the symbol of perfect peace and perfect equality. Several members of the family rested here as they had desired, under the common simple covering of the turf, without anything to mark the spot of their repose ; others lay bedecked with crests and coats of arms, and all the pride and parade of station, in the wide vaults under the chapel. Henry and Robert descended into this

vault. Ruprecht, after having unlocked the door for them, remained above sitting on a piece of marble, which looked like an unfinished grave stone.

The vault contained nothing more than is common to all other vaults, coffins, coats of arms, and mouldering decay—but there was one coffin, hewn simply of oak, and bearing not the slightest ornament or mark of any sort, not even the name. After a while they re-ascended the steps, and as they emerged from the dark porch of the chapel into the free air, they heard a sudden rustling, and saw once again the light fluttering dress of Pia, and the bull-dog bounding after her; for the wild, shy child had been with Ruprecht during their absence, and had taken flight at their return; again they caught a glimpse of her, as she crept behind an elder-bush, growing close by the wall of the cemetery, her lovely little face with its bright black eyes peeping through an opening, and staring fixedly at the strangers, half boldly, half in terror—as soon, however, as Robert moved, she shrunk away, and did not re-appear till some minutes afterwards, when she was mounted with Huon on a red peak. Henry could not rid himself of some uncomfortable feelings when he thought of these two beings as the only denizens of the castle; the superannu-

ated, imbecile, old man, and the delicate, orphaned creature who reared in his companionship, must needs grow up a wild bird of the wilderness, fluttering away in terror whenever the fair vision of a human countenance was revealed to her.

"She is quiet and good," said Ruprecht, as he locked the chapel-doors and replaced the key ; "she sat still on the white stone all the time that you were down in the vaults, taking breath after her run ; and she asked who you were, and why I did not kill you, as I killed the wolf who came last winter up the fir-grove, and wanted to play with Huon. She knew not on what a sad stone she was sitting, asking her simple questions about men and wolves. You see, this thing here—when he learned her death—was to have been chiselled after the pattern of that one under which Chelion lies ; but when you brought the great parchment, Master Syndic, and told about his being buried in foreign parts, the mason collected together his hammers and his chisels, and went away, so that the oaken bier was obliged to be left below without a name, and the grave-stone, too, was left with nothing carved upon it. And the artist, too, went away, and left the beautiful green silk curtains hanging—and they hang there still, for he loved green so much—and you must punish both those men, noble sir, for they were unfaith-

ful servants. Alas ! there are many things left unfinished."

"For mercy's sake let us despatch it all quickly ; the presence of this old man horrifies me," whispered Henry to his companion.

"Be patient with him," replied the latter, "he is perfectly harmless."

"I will now lead you to that flat-looking house," said Ruprecht, "and open the cloisters of the Lady Hermenegild ; the place is full of bees now, but they are not wild and will do no harm, for I have never taken their honey, which they have brought from the lime-trees in the cemetery ; it is sweet and fragrant ;—I will show you the wine too—only follow me."

And he led them from the oak-grove to the back of the so-called Sixtus building. On entering it, a strange sight greeted their eyes. A long, narrow gallery of coloured glass, now darkened by the dust which covered it, ran along the building ; through the few broken panes there was a continual swarming in and out of bees, and, as far as could be discerned through the dimmed glass, the whole passage, especially the niches, was strangely built over with enormous honey-combs. The greatest possible activity reigned everywhere ; such whirring and whizzing went on, that no one could look long

at this knot of little republics, in their chosen, but unsuitable place of retreat, without feeling dizzy.

“The nuns used to have this gallery to walk in during recreation time,” said Ruprecht, “but that is no longer possible, because they are all dead, and we cannot go there on account of the bees; but I can show you the cells of the holy women. In the winter I always give the little creatures some straw; Count Christopher used to take away their honey, for he was their master; but I let them build on, and a good many swarms have already flown off to the Fichtau, because they thought there was not room enough here, or because they must do as the young are accustomed to do everywhere. When the Lady Countess Hermenegild, after the death of her Lord Ubaldus in the Holy Wars, had these cells made, and invited the other holy ladies to come and worship God in them, she little thought what sort of inhabitants would fill her splendid glass gallery at last. Yes, it was here that they used to walk, and they made those beautiful things which are preserved still in the Red Saloon; but because the cells had not been blessed by the Holy Father, it was said after the death of our Lady Countess that they could not live here any longer; and the last of the nuns died when my great-grandfather was a child. He, too, was castellan.”

And with these words he had opened a gate at the end of the glass-gallery, and guided them through cells and rooms, through refectory and parlour—and they saw all the antique, dusty furniture, the black images, the darkened windows and the tattered tapestry of the nuns.

They passed on and reached the other apartments of the house, and here again all was ruin and rubbish, and numberless passages and holes surrounded them. Here Ruprecht whispered mysteriously to Henry, signifying that he must follow him, for that he wanted to show him something alone. Henry hesitated at first, but encouraged by Robert, followed the old man. And now the latter gave vent to all possible signs of the most extravagant joy in mien and gesture, as he led him down staircase after staircase, and unlocked door after door, and at last opening a ruined gallery, bade him descend some winding steps. He then unbarred a very small door, and led Henry through it; and behold! there, cask upon cask, lay the wine. The old man pointed to it with high glee and satisfaction, saying, "I have kept it all; the grand entrance is choked up, and they knew nothing about these steps when they came to overlook everything. I alone have taken care of the wine, and I take care of it still; I have never drunk a drop—only you must give me a little

when I grow old and sickly—I would not show all this to the other who is with you; for they will squander away our property, and I would not have let him into the castle at all, if *you* had not been with him;” and at these words he burst out into a childish sob, and before Henry could prevent it, he had knelt down and kissed his right hand, stammering out in a tone of the most abject entreaty, “Be not angry any longer. Bertha has been dead long ago,—and, see, I have cared for everything and cherished the place as my own heart. Oh! I have suffered unutterably.”

Henry could not conceal his agitation, and the thought that lurked in the hidden depths of his soul, the almost incredible conviction that had brought him thither, the conviction that he had not dared to reveal even to his friend, now seemed realized and converted into certainty by the frenzy of a doting old man.

“If it be so,” thought he, “if indeed—”

He could not venture to seek so much as a hair’s breadth farther into the darkened soul of his companion, lest he should unsettle it still more. The derangement of those laws, upon whose existence in the minds of our fellow-creatures we confidently reckon, has something in it so revolting and horrible that we may not trust ourselves to touch even

lightly the unknown machinery, lest the instrument give forth harsher tones than before, and make us doubtful of our own soundness. Neither did the old man require any token of recognition, he made answer to himself, and seemed perfectly satisfied. With an air of bustling consequence he led Henry from cask to cask, pointing out to him the Rhenish, the Spanish, the Portuguese wines, and explaining all his precautions for keeping the casks clean, and for changing the air,—and in all these matters he displayed the most admirable practical good sense. And when he had exhibited the whole of his charge—and it was really an extraordinary collection of casks,—he crept close to Henry's ear, and whispered familiarly,

“That fellow there is the new Syndic of the black town; say not a word to him of all this splendid wine; for they seal up everything till Count Christopher comes back, and he will never come back, he is dead and buried in the Moorish land; and all the rents and taxes are punctually paid and laid up in the council-house of the black town. Go into the Green Saloon, as I told you before; they are all awaiting you there.”

“But will not Pia receive some hurt if we stay away so long?” asked Henry.

“Who?” replied the old man with all the

symptoms of extreme surprise, and he turned the light of his lantern full upon the face of his young companion. His spirit had been hovering over the past, when Pia existed not, and the vulture that preyed upon his brain, mistrust, now returned and beat its dusky wings above his head. Hastily and in silence he returned through the gallery, extinguished the light, concealed the lantern with the greatest care, and conducted Henry through the darkness up the staircases, and along the corridors, till at last they suddenly stood beside Robert, who had been waiting for them at a window. Ruprecht was now as before, mute and half sullen. He strode through an ante-chamber, unlocked and pushed open the folding-doors. A long suite of apartments full of heavy, faded splendour now received them; antique, carved furniture, strange tapestry moth-eaten and torn, tent-beds, tables, rows of chairs, all after the fashion of bygone times solidly but curiously wrought, and all covered with masses of dust and cobwebs, whilst a few dismal rays from the bright sunshire without pierced through the dulled window-panes upon them.

Impressed with the mournful feeling of human nothingness and decay, the friends wandered slowly through these rooms, the scenes of the happiness and misery of former days. Several times was

Henry obliged to lay his hand over his eyes, to repeat to himself who and where he was, and to hide his emotion from Robert.

In this manner they traversed several suites of apartments, from the stately though deserted saloon to the homeliest bed-chambers. The old man had walked beside the friends without any apparent interest in the matter, but when they came out again into an ante-chamber, he suddenly turned round a corner, tore open with manifest haste and pleasure two gigantic folding doors—and presented to their view an unexpected and almost magical scene. It was the Green Saloon; the walls were of the finest, darkest serpentine; vast windows, half-covered with grey silk, admitted the full, glorious light of day, their glass smooth and clear as if they been just made—the true reason being that the old man was in the habit of cleaning them. And glowing in the sun-light, encased in the dark ground of the serpentine, shone forth a whole series of the most beautiful portraits: they were all Scharnasts, men, women, and children, and as the first glance sufficed to show, all by the best masters. The pencils of Rubens and Vandyke might be traced among them, as likewise the skill of the first German artists, and of the Spaniard Murillo. And the sunbeams shone dazlingly upon the armour, upon the gilt hangings, the vases and

furniture, all looking so heavy and massive as though their weight must needs drag the pictures to the ground, upon the soft, golden hair of the women, upon that lovely eye, upon that speaking mouth, upon the hand resting on a marble table or holding together the velvet folds of the dress,—upon the countenances of the men wherein, although varied by a thousand different thoughts and passions, the same family resemblance might be traced:—everything there glistened and sparkled, from the nervous energy of those iron and steel-clad men of olden time, to the pedantry and softness of their descendants decked out with lace and fine linen.

Robert, who had never seen the hall before, was as much enchanted with it as Henry;—Ruprecht, in the excess of his pride and satisfaction, stood by and gave vent to his feelings by awkwardly fumbling and thrusting his fingers among his great bunch of keys; he had taken off his cap as if he had been in a church.

After the first impressions of awe at this unexpected burst of grandeur and magnificence—for the pictures were nearly all considerably larger than life—had in some measure worn away, our two friends began a more minute examination. First and foremost hung that pious lord and knight, old Hans, the founder of the family, and beside him his wedded

wife, Adelgund, a genuinely German countenance, such as we see in Albert Durer's paintings. Then followed a long row of iron men and virtuous ladies ; Bruno and Brigitta—Benó and Ermengarde, Ubaldus, Hermenegild the nun, Johannes the Crusader—and many, many more. Excellent pictures were they all, although manifestly of a much later date than their prototypes ; they had probably been painted from genuine though indifferent originals. Under every portrait the name was painted in letters of gold upon the dark serpentine ground. It was evident that the room had been made for the pictures, not the pictures for the room. Not a single piece of furniture was to be seen in it ; but the window-curtains were most cunningly and artistically folded so as to admit the most varied play of light upon the paintings, and yet to shade them from the intense glare of the sun.

Of the women not one was unlovely, many possessed undeniable charms, and there were some young girls dazzlingly and perfectly beautiful. Of the men not one was insignificant, many were handsome ; on the countenances of some was plainly stamped enthusiasm or unusual power of mind. There was Johannes, the architect of the sphynxes and obelisk ; then Sixtus, the builder of the house they were now exploring, probably of this Green Saloon like-

wise—then Ubaldus, the stern warrior, &c. Far below these was an old man in a sitting posture, his fiery eyes glowing with either poetry or frenzy; this was Procopius, the star-gazer. Young and gentle looking maidens, his daughters, shone in their beauty beside him; and after them came a singular pair, two men, the one habited in rich cloth of gold, with a repulsive countenance and fierce red beard, the other a model of youthful grace and beauty, wearing a green hunting-dress; they were the brothers Julianus and Julius, the sons of Procopius. Henry started back; for if that which a singular chance had lately revealed to him should indeed prove true, and himself be a late offshoot from this princely family, then it must have been through this same youth Julius that the stream of Scharnast nobility had flowed into his own distant native valley. How strange are the fortunes of men! How many incidents must have conspired to bring him here this day to gaze upon the open brow and gentle sparkling eyes of a youth who was probably his great-great-grandfather, the same of whom he had heard so much, who had come no one knew whence, and had lived like no other man, and whom he still could only picture to himself feeble and aged, because his grandfather had so often described him as such, especially when with his

white beard and black velvet dress he lay on the funeral bed of state ; for they had buried him with pomp and solemnity because he was said to be a great lord and count.

Robert stood near his friend, but guessed not what was passing within him. And old Ruprecht looked upon everything with perfect indifference, as if he understood nothing of it.

Meanwhile those same dreaming eyes of Procopius, the same meek, gentle glances of his young daughters, and that same widely dissimilar expression of the hostile brothers, looked on them from their pictures. They passed on.

Julianus was the last who wore armour, but his was a light golden suit, seemingly worn more for ornament than for use. After him came short, fancy swords, laced coats, and hooped petticoats, and whether it were a chance or a sign of those times which, more luxurious than the preceding, had cast the shadow of their degeneracy even over this remote mountain,—it was observable that the series of thinking and intelligent countenances was now at an end, and that they were succeeded by heads apparently full of vanity and emptiness, bedizened with piles of lace, or covered with a forest of curls and ringlets. But just towards the end, before the whole train of portraits abruptly closed,

like the last flash of an expiring flame, there appeared one portrait which forcibly attracted the attention of each spectator.

It was the picture of a man sitting attired in a dress altogether foreign, and seeming to belong to no period of history, a wide, spreading, jet-black mantle embroidered with red silk. A countenance, full of grave beauty and earnestness, yet blended with a soft, dreamy expression, looked down from the picture: "*Jodokus*" was written underneath it. The friends gazed at it curiously, wondering to see the being of whom so many strange reports were current, portrayed with as calm and contemplative a cast of features as might be expected in an Epaminondas.

But whilst they were thus employed, they heard behind them Ruprecht's voice, which had so long been silent, saying, "He himself in his will ordered the sky-blue curtain to be hung over it, and that it should never be withdrawn without pressing reasons for showing the picture."

The friends looked up, and now remarked for the first time that the portrait beside Jodokus was covered with blue silk.

"Well, now there are pressing reasons," said Robert, smiling; "so unveil it."

The old man, however, paid him no attention, but added, with a timorous side-glance at Henry,

"Yes, yes—there are pressing reasons—more pressing cannot be ; but, I warn you, it will shock you."

After a momentary hesitation, he touched a silken cord, and immediately the curtain rolled up of itself, and the old man retreated a few steps, as if overcome with violent emotion. Yet the sight unfolded had nothing in it to inspire terror or aversion ; it was, on the contrary, lovely and attractive. A slight female figure was painted on the canvas, arrayed in deep mourning ; whether she were child or woman, it would be hard to decide. Her fair face rose above her black vesture like a flower among dark leaves. The little white hand rested upon marble, and was mirrored therein. The eyes had an expression of wonder and amazement. At her feet crouched a golden pheasant.

In the serpentine below was written "*Chelion*."

The two friends contemplated this charming portrait for some time with increasing pleasure, but, as they turned to go away, they saw to their surprise that the grey old castellan was still standing motionless a few paces off, his eyes riveted with a sort of rapture upon the picture. They both cast upon it another glance, and Henry said, after a pause, "She is wonderfully, strangely beautiful." Then the old man crept softly towards them, and, as he approached Henry, he thrust his hand forward so that the dry,

bony arm stood out from the sleeve of his threadbare coat, saying, in a low, hoarse voice, "Yes, she is beautiful; that is the misfortune, she is so beautiful—beyond all description beautiful. I pray you, Count Sixtus, upon my knees I pray you! keep yourself from temptation; for hell depends upon a hair!—All was right; he always loved her, as the eagle loves its young; but then, before she died, she was white—white as the lilies that grow down in the marsh, and lay their heads upon the black waters. And he looked at me so often with his bright eyes; and when he had that long white beard, he still looked at me with those bright black eyes, just as the owl stares at night-time. But I have kept the teeth of my mouth closed firm as iron, and not a word have I let escape: and so he always loved me, and when he sat in his cottage below the mountain, and the sun shone, he would take my hand and fondle it, and say, 'Dear Ruprecht! dear Ruprecht!' for, look you,"—and here the old man crouched up to Henry's ear, and whispered, with a fearful laugh,—“in his last days he was weak and crazed.”

The two men shuddered, and Henry stepped a few paces back, but the castellan pursued him softly with sparkling eyes. “He would have thrown you over the rock. But you are much handsomer

than he ever was. I saw him when he stood by Procopius's tower at night, and his black mantle was as dark as the storm-clouds over head. It lightened, and the silk mantle rustled; and the night was so hot and long—do you remember?—long as three other nights; but at last bright morning came, and you were gone: and then came such heavy, heavy times. I have told you that she grew as white as a lily, and thinner than ever. But all are dead; poor Chelion died, my wife Bertha died, you died; and after he had set fire to the castle, and he himself lay dead in the little place below, stretched out, wearing his white beard like a torn banner, then came her son, poor Christopher! You see, he comes next; but he is dead too, and Narcissa,—and they are all dead.”

Involuntarily the friends looked at the picture next to Chelion's, and saw represented a young man, her perfect image, beautiful and foreign-looking like her, but with a sad and gloomy expression. This, therefore, had been the last proprietor of the castle.

At another time or in any other place they would have lingered longer over these remarkable portraits, but now this was not possible; for the old man beside them was overcome with such fearful excitement that at his last words he burst into a fit of

hysterical weeping and covered his face with his hands, the tears flowing thickly through his clasped fingers, and his powerful frame trembling with anguish, just as the sea heaves when a storm is raging at a distance. The friends in their inmost soul could not but imagine themselves looking into some abyss of former crime or violence, but they would not inquire further; for insanity, like a gloomy northern light, was already faintly hovering over the unhappy being before them, and they feared lest it should suddenly break forth into frenzy, and lending supernatural strength to the nervous though aged frame, urge him into some deed of violence. And besides, the human heart naturally revolts from tracing the steps that have led another into misery and sin. Therefore neither spoke a word, even to each other, and they continued to look gravely and sadly upon the two portraits—mother and son. Chelion was beautiful as a pure angel, and Christopher as a fallen one. Beside him was a long row of empty niches for descendants yet unborn, as though the builder had counted upon an eternity for his race.

The friends now turned to go away, for the air of this saloon had become oppressive to them. They would have passed by Ruprecht without making any observation, convinced that when he

had grown calmer he would follow them in silence. But on perceiving their intention, he suddenly let his hands fall from his face, and instead of his former excitement exhibited the most extreme surprise, his tears resting like frozen drops upon the white frost of his beard.

“How is this?” cried he passionately,—“why then have I brought you here? why are you turning away? I have had patience with you the whole day long; I have had the greatest patience all the time you would be looking and looking into everything else, and would not come where I wanted to bring you; I have had patience with you that I might at last show you what I had done—and why will you go away?”

“Then show us, old friend, what thou hast done,” said Henry kindly; “show us, we shall be pleased to see it.”

“See,” cried Ruprecht in a softer tone, “they are all here—all who have lived and breathed upon the Red Stone, they are all assembled in the Green Saloon; only one, *one* only was cast out,—I have always loved him, and thought, ‘it shall not be so:’ look you, it was I who placed you in the Saloon even while he was alive, but he knew it not; he passed by and knew it not. Now wait, I must first let down the blue curtain, because it is never to be kept drawn up.”

With these words he ran towards Chelion's picture. "Veil thyself," said he, "thou too lovely creature"—and he touched the cord, whereupon the curtain fell, gradually covering the picture till nothing was visible but the stiff, smooth, unconscious silk. Then filled with a strange joy, the old man sprang to the empty niche beside Christopher, pressed a spring, and, to the surprise of the friends, the seeming serpentine broke asunder—the triumphant chuckle and laugh of the old man mingling with the noise of its breaking. They now saw that in this niche an imitation of the green marble had been painted upon a plate of copper, and that this plate on being drawn back exposed to view a picture which it had hitherto concealed. It was the portrait of a young man, and in the serpentine below was written "*Sirtus II.*"

But the portrait was Henry's, exact in every feature, the costume alone was different.

And the old man rubbed his hands exultingly, as though he would say, "Now! what do you think now?"

Robert was perplexed to the utmost. He had hitherto accompanied the two others like one who is inspecting a museum of curiosities; but now his head turned round, he knew not where he was. A

thought shot like lightning through his brain, but it was too ridiculous, too absurd for him to harbour it one moment, and he could only look inquiringly towards his friend. The latter, who at first glance had turned deadly pale, gradually became flushed with a burning crimson; he could make no reply to Robert's silent question. The crazy old man was the only one of the party who was entirely free from embarrassment; with a bustling, joyous eagerness, which no one could have expected from him, he resumed the task of explanation, while a crafty smile expressed his perfect satisfaction with himself and his own contrivances.

"I have had you painted," he began, "from the little round picture that was in the lid of your travelling-case—do you remember?—I stole it that night you went away, and kept it carefully. A very old man it was that copied it; you must reward him, for he loved you so much. The live-long day he used to sit up in Julian's castle, in a little room up the falling staircase, where I kept him concealed, and brought him meat and drink. There he sat and painted, and days and weeks passed away before you were made as beautiful as you are now. Poor man! he was so old that I was obliged almost to carry him up the stairs, whilst they creaked beneath our weight, and threatened to fall down every moment. 'God

reward you, Ruprecht,' he said, 'God reward you for it, when you are old like me.' Not a far-thing has he received for his painting; you must give him something, for he is old, and despised, and poor."

"Alas! he is now far beyond the reach of earthly recompence," said Henry, mournfully.

"And now," continued the castellan, with great animation, "now the false copper must be taken away, and we will place you next to Jodok and Chelion, because you came before Christopher, and he must take his place below you. Fear not, Count Sixtus, Jodok has been dead long ago—he was old, very old, and had a long white beard; 'dear Ruprecht,' he used to say when he sat upon the bench, outside his hut—and Christopher is dead too. Narcissa must not go into the Green Saloon, because she was not properly married; besides, her picture was not finished, for it was a peevish man who painted her, and he went away when Christopher was dead. But now, most noble Count, you will come and live here, and bring servants and people to the castle, that there may be life and mirth in it once more, and that there may be posterity to fill the whole saloon and populate future ages, until the last day shall come."

"Leave him in his delusion," said Robert, "we

shall madden his brain before we make him understand that thou art not Sixtus."

"And if I am not Sixtus," answered Henry, "still I am, at least, one of this family. I pray thee, do not question me now, it is all as clear as the day to me, but every nerve within me is trembling. Another time I will discover all to thee, only do not question me now."

Then, greatly excited, he turned towards Ruprecht, and said in a distinct and decided tone, as though he had no doubt on the subject, "Thou hast done well, old man, in all this—I thank thee for it, I thank thee, and will carefully provide for thy future days."

In his weakness the poor old man could hardly restrain himself from weeping at hearing these words, and strange convulsive motions passed over his wrinkled and time-worn countenance. He bowed many times, and bowed low, but with a sort of condescension like a servant who is receiving a merited reward—it would have been ridiculous in any other circumstances. "I have only done my duty," said he, "I have only done my duty." Then, with every possible symptom of satisfaction, and yet with a certain dignity of manner, he went up towards the picture, and said—

"For the last time we will close it up, noble

Count ; but soon it shall be displayed openly before the eyes of all men and for ever. Oh ! I knew you immediately," he added, with a bright, happy smile, "I knew you immediately, when to-day you asked for admission !" With these words he restored the copper plate to its place, and fastened it in, so that not a trace remained to show where it had been opened.

"So now all is seen and ended," said he, stepping back. In fact all the successive niches were empty, and the friends walked on to the door which led to the other apartments of the building.

It might be guessed that they gave but little heed to all that followed. They passed, however, through most compartments of the Sixtus buildings.

The Red Saloon they found hung and filled with the thousand-fold labours of the pious ladies of Rothenstein. At another time they would have found it interesting to examine some of these relics, but now the two friends hurried onwards, anxious only to get out into the open air as soon as they could, and pour out their hearts to each other. There was only one apartment that at all attracted their attention, it was the last, close to the front entrance. It was built in an hexagonal form, and used for painting ; all the pictures in the Green Saloon had been prepared here. And mournfully did it now make manifest its former destination to

its present visitors, for painting materials were left carelessly scattered around, and one might have fancied that the artist had only just gone away, had not the dried colours, the dust, and cobwebs plainly testified that no human hand had been active there for many years. All the window-curtains, save one, were carefully drawn down, so as to throw light only upon the canvass. A model, large as life, was seated there, and heavy, green silk drapery was tastefully hung around it; but the folds were covered with thick dust, and the gloss of the material had disappeared. The red velvet seat, on which the persons whose portraits were to be taken used to sit, was empty, but on the easel might still be seen the unfinished likeness of her who had sat there last. A wide border of serpentine was painted round it, that the artist might be able to judge of the effect his work would produce in the place of honour which, alas!—it never was destined to fill—the head was completed, the figure and the ground were merely sketched in outline, and the hands were left like two white spots. Henry wiped the greater part of the dust away with his handkerchief, and could then distinguish the outline of a slender and beautiful girl, like a narcissus, her head meekly bent forwards, as if weighed down by the luxuriance of her lovely blonde ringlets.

“Go on, only go on quickly,” said the old man

entreatingly, "I beseech you earnestly, go on—it is only my poor child—why should I stand here? I have wept for her before now, often, often. She was to have gone into the Green Saloon, but he was killed in the heathen's land—the painter went away—she died. And look you, the painter came here again craftily, and wanted to take the picture and the things away with him, but I told him that I would stab him dead if he did—so he went and never came again. I beseech you, leave it alone and pass on. All was left unfinished; all is false; her honour left clouded like this picture; her promised elevation to rank, delusive like the stone painted round her figure. Oh! so many, many things have gone wrong, fearfully wrong, since you have been away: Count Jodok banished his son Christopher, and he never returned till his father was dead, and then he came and was like a shy blackbird on the mountain, and kept company only with that slender yellow-hammer that held its head so timidly and was so gentle. But both of them were beautiful, more beautiful than anything else upon the earth, and it was all peace and quiet on the mountain. Let them rest, let them rest! Here is the gate; you can get immediately into the Indian garden of the cruel Jodok. See, the garden is so beautiful—only go out, go out, I pray you."

And he hastily tore the gate wide open, pointed to the lovely and delicate green shade that invited them, and was evidently relieved when the friends had left the room. Then he violently shoved to the folding-doors, turned the key three times, and struck with his fist upon the iron gate, as if right glad to quit the building. His two companions also were not sorry to leave the black, gloomy old house, and to see the bright green landscape, as it lay before them smiling in the afternoon's sun. The garden through which they now passed abounded with the loveliest shrubs and trees, most of them of foreign growth. In its centre stood a high white monument, hewn from the finest marble, with the inscription, "Jodokus and Chelion." Presently they reached Jodok's Grecian structure, or Parthenon, as it was called. The columns still raised their stately forms into the air, and corridors and terraces also remained in their place; but the beauty of the marble had been horribly blackened and disfigured by smoke and flame, whilst a number of hideous, plebeian-looking bricks were inserted among the broken pillars, a disgrace and shame to the noble and classical structure, noble even in its ruins.

They did not tarry long even here—for there was nothing to be seen save the hollow empty shell of former grandeur, and desolation brooded over the

spot. They passed behind the building, through a large orchard, and thence through the decaying fir-grove, to the tower of Procopius the star-gazer. The tower itself was empty, save that fragments of astronomical instruments, maps and books, lay scattered around. Outside of it, however, towards the south, was placed a gigantic Eolian harp. Its strings reached from the stone pavement surrounding the tower to the summit, and they vibrated slightly and tenderly beneath the light breath of the summer wind, while the friends stood beside it, as though to give them a kindly greeting. Often, however, in the course of that day's wanderings had they heard it send forth a long, loud cry.

They had now reached the opposite side of the mountain and began to retrace their steps. The old path way, which led sideways from the tower, conducted them back to the gate through which they had entered, that being indeed the only entrance. Before reaching the court of the obelisk and the sphynxes, they passed the castellan's domicile ; it was a low, wide cottage, built on a hot sandy plain, and here they again saw the child Pia, sleeping among the marigolds in the neglected garden. An old woman, probably Ruprecht's servant-maid, sat beside her, and kept the flies off. At a little distance reclined the dog, gravely eyeing the group.

On their way from the mountain, Ruprecht had followed the two young men like a tame spaniel. Now, when they stopped a moment to contemplate the scene in the garden and he passed them by, they perceived that his pale-blue eyes dwelt on vacancy, that he cast not a look upon his family-group, but moved straight on towards the wall. On arriving there, he opened the portal, and bowed his visitors out with as much ceremony as when he had previously bowed them in. They passed though the narrow gate and heard the keys chinking behind them. After creeping a little way through the overgrown hazel-bushes, they once again found themselves in the fir-tree avenue.

The evening breeze sighed monotonously among the long hairy branches, as the cool air of the morning had done, and silence and fragrance were wafted down from the fir-tops. The mystery of the mountain, which Henry had been seeking, was now left behind them, the high, grey, mute wall shrouding it as before.

They were now alone, and as they began to tread the gloomy, unfrequented avenue, Robert exclaimed, "Now, Henry, explain what all this means."

"I will tell you," was the reply, "but first explain to me how it happened that you never told me a word of this extraordinary castle and its strange

inhabitants, during the many weeks that I have been lodging at the Green Fichtau."

"Your question is even stranger than the matter itself," replied Robert. "How could it occur to me that, after having been so long in the valley, you should never have heard what was on everybody's lips? or how was it likely that I should suddenly begin talking to you of that which others had only just left off speaking about?"

"Well, then, it is by a sort of miracle that I have become acquainted with the castle," said Henry, "and otherwise it would have remained for ever unknown to him whom it concerned most. Now listen to me. You know already, as I told you, that I had discovered some wonderful ruins, and had got the chattering old innkeeper at the Fichtau to tell me something about them; you know that yourself showed me the extraordinary will of these Scharnasts: but there is one thing you do not know, viz. that a thunderbolt seemed to fall upon me when I heard the name,—for a Scharnast was my ancestor—and I dared not discover to any man on earth my conjecture that he belonged to this family, lest it might have proved unfounded; the idea seemed to hover before me like a soft, fragrant mist, which might melt away ere I had stretched out my hand to grasp it. I wrote that same evening to my

mother, to inquire more particularly concerning the name of our ancestor, and all she knew of his connections, and I sent the letter to the post that night. So you see, friend, it was not curiosity alone that brought me to this mountain, but a sort of blind instinct. Of course, to you the castellan must have appeared crazy, and my resemblance to that picture an optical delusion, whilst to me it was all as clear as the sun at noon-day. I will tell you my story, only give me attention.

“A hundred and twenty years ago, a stranger came into our valley, which was then a thick forest, scarcely broken by a few scattered huts and fields. This man, who brought no one with him but a most lovely girl, his daughter, was already well-stricken in years, wore a white beard and dark clothes. With the help of the work people and servants whom he engaged, he built a pretty white house on the slope of the hill, and laid out the space around in gardens and fields. To all who dwelt with or near him, he was said to have done good; he directed and instructed them in a thousand different things, and lived such a life as the sages of former times. Now, soon after his arrival, it happened that my great-grandfather, a wealthy and educated man, and a distinguished botanist, attracted by the wild beauty of this woodland region, was induced to settle

therein, and to construct a similar dwelling. And as he was still young, and, as tradition reports, uncommonly handsome, it naturally came to pass that he and the stranger's daughter found favour in each other's eyes and married. The venerable stranger lived to the age of a hundred years, and at his death it appeared that he was a Count, and that his name was Julius von Scharnast. Persons of distinction—whether friends or relations nobody knew—came to attend his body to its rustic grave. The whole tradition was gradually dying away in our family, scarcely ever spoken of, and scarcely believed by some. But imagine what were my feelings, when I heard the host of the Fichtau mention the long forgotten names; they absolutely rang in my ears,—and imagine what I felt when I entered this castle and the castellan greeted me as his master—when I stood before that picture in its old-fashioned dress—when I found myself playing a part in the youthful remembrances of that aged man! Think only, that if it be as I feel assured it is, then that gentle, handsome boy Julius, in the hunting-dress, is the wise old sage of our forest, and I, visiting the Fichtau merely to pick up flowers and stones, have discovered the ancient heritage of my fathers! How wonderful! But why I should bear so strong a resemblance to that

other picture of another line, that Sixtus the Second, I know not, unless it be one of those family miracles that happen now and then, when suddenly in one member the entire formation of person is repeated after a lapse of several generations,—perchance, as a sign from Heaven to testify that a distant scion of the race is still living, who without this might never have been recognized as such.”

But Robert, at his friend's last words, shook his head almost mournfully, and said,

“This is most assuredly an astonishing and marvellous history, and you relate it just as if it were perfectly clear and unquestionable ; but, for my part, I almost dread the consequences. Of course, you expect me to rejoice over your discovery, and so I would—but there are such numberless difficulties in the way ; for you see, Henry, your remembrances would just count for nothing in a court of law ; the name is doubtful, and, as for the castellan, his recognition merely follows upon your resemblance to that picture, which is quite accidental. I can look forward to nothing but an interminable law-suit. Will it not be said, that the resemblance is so ridiculously exact that you yourself must have had the picture painted, and hidden to suit your purpose ? or, after all, what does it prove ? Tell me, besides what you have already related, is there nothing else, ever

so trivial, that you can remember, whereon proof may be founded ?”

“In truth,” replied Henry, “I know nothing about the matter, except that the old man was called Julius, Count Scharnast, or rather, I think that he was called so ; but I have written to my mother to ask her about it, and also to ask whether there were not some papers of his left at his death. I would have gone home immediately, had I not wished first to visit the castle, and to ask counsel of you, who are experienced in this sort of business. As soon as ever I receive my mother’s answer, I will communicate it to you, and you can decide what is to be done next.”

“That is well,” said Robert ; “but beware of speaking a word about it to any one else, or somebody will begin countermining. If the affair be really as you believe, there must be certain and undoubted documents, belonging to this same Julius Scharnast lying somewhere ; the difficulty is only how to find them and use them skilfully before others get an inkling of the matter. Such papers there must be, unless your old sage was as crazy as the rest of his family, or totally indifferent to the claims of his posterity. If your mother’s letter give any, the very least clue, I will go with you and help you to follow it up, or else you

will certainly commit some grand mistake, and only embroil yourself to no purpose."

"Thank you," said Henry; "I knew that you would lend me your kind and friendly aid, and therefore it was that I trusted you with the secret."

"Kind and friendly!" repeated Robert; "the affair is so strange and remarkable, that I should be a perfect tiger if I did not strain every nerve to serve you. And I can't understand how you can speak so quietly and composedly on the subject, as if the question merely related to the lease of a farm, or the sale of a horse."

"Why, the reason is plain; I have had the idea in my mind eight days already, and am now accustomed to it: besides, it has, meantime, become a complete conviction, and perfectly clear."

"I only wish it would be equally clear to the court," said Robert; and then he went on, with a calculating air,—“see, there must be a certificate of baptism or of marriage, perhaps the old man's will, correspondence, officer's commission, and so forth—if they have not torn up the papers. Then there ought, yes, there must be, somewhere in the vaults of the Red Stone, writings referring to Julius Scharnast; then the agreement for buying the land in the forest, and for building your great-grandfather's house—it must be in some archive or

other. Your valley belongs to the Crown, does it not ?”

“I pray you, spare me these questions at present,” replied Henry, “for I know nothing whatever about such things ; but when we start on our voyage of discovery, I will take you wherever you will, and make all necessary inquiries.”

“Well, I hope and trust all is right, and I will do my best for you,” said Robert ; “but I have my fears, very strong fears, that we shall not be able to carry the matter through.”

“I have none,” said Henry ; “either everything will go on smoothly, or else it will prove a delusion of mine. I should only be sorry, very sorry, for that fine old castle’s sake, that I might not work and plant upon the mountain, and preserve all its treasures and paintings from decay.”

“It would certainly be very pleasant for me, too,” replied Robert, “real joy to me, the greatest joy of my life, Trini and my child excepted, to have thee lord and master up there, leading a calm and happy life among all those remains of a tragical and, perhaps, sinful past. You would make everything bright and cheerful ; you would be so near to us, your mother and sister with you—and, perhaps, a sweet little bride too, eh ? Have I caught you now ?”

"Do not mention it," said Henry, colouring ;
"do not mention it now."

"Come, come, there is nothing to be ashamed of," returned Robert ; "she is a noble girl, and worth more than all the countesses and princesses in the world."

"Indeed, she is worth much more," said Henry.

"Well, then, act promptly," rejoined the other, and let everything else go on as it will."

Thus talking, the friends had descended the mountain, and saw Count Jodok's cottage overgrown with thick brushwood, and the stone bench in front of it where he used to sit during the last days of his life ; then they passed on to the village, where a meal had been ordered for them, and where their carriage was waiting. Towards evening they drove back to Priglitz. But often did they look back upon the old castle ; and quite late, long after the sun had set, just as they were about entering the Vale of the Pernitz, the green hills again parted asunder, and afforded another view of the deserted, and apparently enchanted mountain as, like a fairy vision, it melted into the twilight. Again their thoughts reverted to its inhabitants,—the doting old man, the child, her aged attendant, and the dog ; they thought again of those projecting, ruined buildings, and the solemn, silent portraits ; then the

black forest interposed, they darted round the corner, and the wide Vale of the Pernitz received them. Joyously they rode on through the darkness beside that noisy and well-known stream, in order to set down Henry at the Green Fichtau. The old familiar mountain-tops closed darker and larger around the carriage, and the friends did not reach the house until the waning moon stood high above them, throwing its pale greyish light upon the roofs, and gemming the torrent with diamonds, while herbs and grass were spangled with dew. And the Pernitz rolled on its waves of liquid silver, and the forests were brightened with the calm, tranquil moonshine; and all the windows of the inn were dark, thus marking the repose of its peaceful inhabitants. Henry sprang down from his seat, and rapped with his wooden hammer on the door of the Green Fichtau, but Robert continued his way, eager to reach his home and reassure the expectant Trini.

The carriage had rattled past the stone wall, and the servant of Erasmus, who had heard the light tapping at the door and recognized Henry's voice, had admitted him; and again the merry Sunday guests of the Green Fichtau, the talkative Erasmus, the two wanderers, the mountaineers, and the fond heart wrapped up in its elysium of happiness, all were veiled in the same

soft soothing mantle of night, and delivered over to their dreams.

And there we will leave them, and soar meantime up into the bright air above, thence to take a survey of the mountain. There it lies beneath us, its black peaks pointing up towards the moon, bright threads of light streaming down its sides. Orion has already sunk low, his foremost star hidden behind the black mountain-ridge; but the moon is still high in the heavens, spreading over them the veil of her soft silvery splendour, and extinguishing every little star near her. All that we survey, the mountain-chain that throws its shadowy outline up into the sky, the heights crowned with dusky foliage blending their hues with those of the jagged rocks, —all that we thus overlook reposes under the shadow of that castle which we have visited to-day with the two friends; and all the beings who are now slumbering beneath await therefrom their future weal or woe. And we wish from our heart that they may all fall under the guardianship of the simple-hearted man who has to-day been within its mouldering walls. He is gentle and kind, and will extend over them a sway both just and beneficent. But we will now descend from our height, and suffer the remainder of the night to pass away over the silent mountains unseen and unfelt, till its last

silvery beam grows pale in the west, and the golden flame of the morning appears, awakening all voices to fresh sounds of joy or bustle, and the dormant spirit of man to renewed exertion or suffering.

By the time the morning had dawned we find Henry in his chamber, already up and dressed. While without, golden rays of light were streaming over houses and pastures, he was busying himself with packing plants and minerals into flat chests, carefully screwing on the lids and labelling them with various inscriptions. This employment occupied his whole day. And, though meanwhile, he often went up to the window, nay, even strolled through the garden, he did not once catch a glimpse of Anna; it seemed almost as though the maiden avoided him. Towards evening, however, when he was crossing over the bridge and then ascending the Grahm Mountain, her face was lurking behind the white curtains of the window, and following him till he could be seen no more. In the twilight he returned, and with him the host's great dog, whom he had found in the wood and who was greatly attached to him, for brutes seem to know good men by intuition, and seek their notice.

Thus passed the next day, and the next; but on Wednesday, when he came down stairs to take his mid-day meal, Anna hastened to him from the

garden, blushing deeply, and saying, "There has been a letter lying for you in father's room ever since the morning ; Trini's Robert has sent it by a special messenger."

Henry changed colour at this news, and they parted without another word.

The letter was from Henry's mother ; with a trembling hand he opened it and read as follows :

"DEAR SON,—Thou writest so seldom and so shortly that we hardly know how thou art getting on, or what we can send thee. With respect to the subject of thy last letter, our Pastor bids me greet thee from him, and tell thee that it is registered in the church-books at Grünberg, that thy great-grandfather Melchior, in the year 1719, was united in holy matrimony to the young and noble lady Angelica Scharnast, who was the daughter of Colonel Julius Scharnast. The Colonel was called a Count before he came here, that, however, is not stated ; but if thou wilt know the particulars, our Pastor thinks they may be found laid up in the archives of the Town Council at Grünberg, which, doubtless, will be opened to thee upon desire ; or if not, thou wilt find some papers of the Colonel's locked up in the vaults of the Town Hall, for so the late Syndic told thy father. If the matter be

of any importance, come thyself and look them over. Thy sister has again been very ill, but is now better. The chests with the herbs we have delivered to the messenger; we would rather see thee apply to something else, but do as pleases thee best. I greet thee with a mother's heart, thy sister salutes thee too, and so commending thee to God's protection, I remain thy loving mother,

“MAGDALENA.”

Henry refolded the letter; and if at opening it he had turned pale, on its perusal his face became crimson. He ran quickly to his room, packed up all the treasures that were lying there, that they might be ready for Simon to take away next Monday; and gave the trunk with his clothes to a carrier in the Fichtau to be conveyed forthwith to Robert at Priglitiz; he then hastily despatched a scanty meal, though without any particular relish. All this done, he went up to Erasmus, who was still sitting with his family at dinner in the garden, in order to pay his reckoning and take leave. Erasmus produced the bill, pocketed his money and promised that Simon should carefully remove every chest, and that all should be punctually delivered at the place appointed. Henry gave his hand to both father and mother; to Anna he could only

trust himself to say, "Farewell, maiden!" and she made no other reply but "Fare thee well!" He then turned away and departed.

"He is, after all, a thoroughly good-hearted fellow," said father Erasmus, and all three continued their repast in almost mournful silence.

The next day intelligence was brought from Priglitz, that Henry and Robert had started off, nobody knew whither. The report was confirmed by Trini the same afternoon; she came with her child on a visit to her father the smith, and stayed above a week. Even she knew nothing of the object of the journey. At last she returned home.

Day followed day, week followed week, and still the young men were absent. But when, at last, Robert came back alone, he brought with him a piece of intelligence which flew like wild-fire through the district, from one mountain of the Fichtau to another, raising in Anna's inmost heart a perfect tempest of joy and terror.

CHAPTER III.

THE RED ROCK.

WHILST not only the Fichtau, but also the whole district was in a fever of talk and excitement about the marvel that had come to pass—whilst workpeople of all kinds were busied at Rothenstein, so that the mountain, once so desolate was now full of life and bustle—whilst the gate so long walled up was again opened hospitably wide, and masons and artificers of all sorts, mounted on a scaffolding, were labouring at its decoration—whilst every path over the mountain was alive with rattling cars and waggons, every bush in motion, every room, every roof in the hands of workmen—whilst all this was going on, Henry, one day, walked slowly through the wide dilapidated gate of Julian's Castle, the only building where restoration was not attempted, passed along the trodden path over the rubbish-heaps to the opposite opening, crossed the ruined garden, and stopped at last before the high

red rock where the path terminated. Here he drew a key from his bosom—the seals had already been taken away—turned it in the lock three times, and gently pushed open the high gates of wrought iron. They opened upon a long, dark passage, from which steps of red marble conducted to a second iron gate of elaborate workmanship, its keyhole lined with massive gold. He entered and shut the outer gates behind him, he strode over the faint trellis-work of sunshine, cast by the lattice windows down upon the stone flooring of the passage, and after ascending the steps, he unlocked the second portal. A wide, lofty, rocky saloon now presented itself with the same chequered play of light and shade upon its floor as was seen in the passage, and its walls, which were built in an hexagonal form, glistened like metal beneath the feeble rays of the sun. Henry entered and closed the gate behind him, then, passing round the walls, touched several springs connected with the windows, whereupon soft streams of light issued from above, making all things clear and bright, but destroying the wondrous colours that had hitherto sported over the floor. And now, before attending to anything else, Henry opened a little steel door in the wall, over which was inscribed in letters of gold, the name, "~~Henricus~~ **Henricus** **II.**," and laid within it some sheets of closely written

paper. Many other such doors were seen around, most of them bearing a name in golden characters above. The rocky chamber contained no furniture of any description, save only a marble table which stood in front of a species of altar, and a high armchair of iron. Henry passed by many of the doors; one of the last of those labelled he opened, and drew forth from the iron recess the papers preserved therein. Seated in the high-backed chair, the papers laid before him on the table, he turned over the first pages till he came to a passage which had been interlined, then bending his head forwards he read as follows:

“And, therefore, I owe no thanks to you, Ubaldus, and Johannes, and Procopius, and Julianus—or by whatever name you may be called—for the demon which prompts our actions comes to each of us in a new form, and we cannot recognize him as the same which tempted you, and therefore your writings are useless to me. Every life is a new life, and whatever the youth feels and does, is to him as though it had never been felt or done before. And when all is over, each adds his share to the rubbish of past centuries which fills this chamber—and nought is it but rubbish, for every one works the mystery of life afresh.

“Whatever I may record here, is not what I

myself have been, that I cannot write ; but what was done through me. I have desired the earth and the stars, the love of all men, even of the dead, and of the unborn, the love of God, and of all the angels. I was as it were the key-stone to the millions of years that have been, and the central point of the universe, as thou too, my successor, shall feel some time hence.—Meanwhile, the world rolls on—and whither?—that we cannot tell.—Millions upon millions have laboured and been borne away, fresh millions will labour and pass away in their turn. It must be so ; despite of all that paintings, and monuments, and history can do, despite of the treasured garments and habitations of the past—when the spirit is gone—that fair, unfathomed mystery—it is gone for ever ! The grass whereon we tread shall spring afresh, the sand where our track was left shall be stirred by the wind, the threshold where we sat shall be rooted up, in order that the world may again grow young and virgin as before, and not be troubled with the memory of the dead. The spirit ye cannot retain on earth, and whatever else is left behind us is put to shame by the indifference of the new-comers. Better then were it to give our relics to the pure, the bright, the consuming fire, that nothing may be left, save the blue air which we have breathed, which thou now breathest, which

millions before thee have breathed, and which still is spread above thee unstained and bright as though just created, and as though thou wert, even now, for the first time inhaling the fresh enlivening draught. If thou have darkened its light, then cover thine eyes with thy hands; weep bitterly for what thou hast done, weep as much as thou wilt—but then spring up again, and seize the wheel of life, and help it to roll on till thou too art no more, till others have forgotten thee, and they in their turn have been forgotten, and others are in their place.

“Marvel not at this my anguish, seeing that all I have written in the foregoing pages was bright and pleasant; marvel not, for I am about to call up the demon of my heaviest crime, and from the parchments of the Red-rock this demon first came to me. There lie the sleepers of whom our ancestor presumptuously thought that they should never die—an awful, ghostly company lies there, and before every descendant their deeds must be rehearsed; their deeds, which whether good or bad, constituted their life, and consumed that life. If thy conscience permit thee, unborn son of mine, burn these scrolls, and blow up the rock into the air. I would do it myself, but I tremble before my oath. If thou canst not do it either, then forget quickly all that thou hast read, that the ghosts of past misdeeds may

not haunt and trouble thine own existence, and that thou mayst continue to drink the cup of bliss pure and undefiled as from the hands of thy Creator.

“I will now proceed.

“After I had returned from France, and the image of the faithful Alfred had already begun to fade away—after I had travelled almost all over the world—after I had returned unopened every letter the Marchioness sent me, till at last she sent no more—then it occurred to me—read what follows, because thou hast sworn to read it, as I have written it because I had sworn to write it—but when thou hast closed the iron gate of the vault behind thee, scatter all memory thereof to the winds.

“It was in Hindoostan, under the shade of foreign trees, beside a river so clear that it seemed to be but fluid air flowing gently over the glittering pebbles, that I met the daughter of a Pariah, one of the most despised of humankind ; but beautiful—beautiful beyond every expression that language can invent, and beyond every image that for centuries has filled the wildest fancy.

“In the parchment rolls I had learned how empty and vain is everything whereof men make their pride and pleasure ; for all that my forefathers had done was vanity. I would do a new thing—martial fame I had already tasted ; that nauseous bloody wine ;

I had questioned art, but what can she say? nothing when the heart is silent; the sciences were mere counters on the money-tables of the world—Love was sensuality, and Friendship selfishness.—Then it occurred to me that I would go to the Himalaya mountains; I would see the vast untainted works of God, and would trust myself upon the unchanging ocean.

“I came to the Himalaya; there I learned the Hindoo language; there I studied the Brahman’s life, a different life from our’s: that is to say, a different species of vanity. And there I saw the young Pariah glide between the palm-trees to draw water from the river for her father: all her life she had done nothing else besides wandering through the forest to fetch water, to collect dates, and pluck herbs for her father.

“ ‘Touch me not, do not speak to me,’ she said to the stranger, ‘lest thou become unclean,’ and then she placed the pitcher upon her shoulder, beside her soft white throat, and moved away between the slender palm-trees.

“And thus passed days and months; not a human creature was in the forest save myself, for they would have become unholy by contact with her. The father sat under the fig-trees, and seemed careless and indifferent to all the world; and when one

day he was found dead, and she did not come to the river, I went to her, and touched her too ; for I took her hand to comfort her. I spoke to her, but she shrunk back and trembled like a startled doe.

“ ‘Thou must go and wash,’ said she, ‘and make thyself clean again.’

“ ‘I will not wash,’ was my reply, “ ‘I will be a Pariah like thee ; I will come to thee often ; I will bring thee fruits and herbs, and thou shalt give me water from the pitcher.”

“ ‘And I came often—I talked to her, I told her of our Brahma, the Holy One, who is so gentle and loving to the children of His people, and who commands not the death of the wife when her husband dies, but wills her to live on and rejoice in the light of the sun.

“ ‘But if she go of her own free-will, then will he not receive her gladly ?’ asked she, fixing her gazelle-like eyes upon me.

“ ‘He will receive her,’ I replied, ‘because she has meant well ; but He is grieved that she should have deprived herself of her beautiful earthly life, instead of abiding meekly till death should come and take her away to her husband, who can well wait for her.’

“ ‘See now, thou hast said thyself that he would be waiting for her,’ answered she quickly ; ‘thou art in error : she ought, certainly, to follow him at once.—When thou goest back to thine own coun-

try,' added she, more slowly, 'back to thine own home which lies somewhere beyond these high white mountains, I shall be very sad, and think that I ought to follow thee.'

" 'And wilt thou be my wife?' inquired I, suddenly.

" And now it was, that for the first time, I acted wrongly towards her. Her words had enchanted me: I persuaded her to become mine and to follow me. She knew no other happiness than that of living in the forest, enjoying the fruits, gathering flowers, and preparing the simple offerings that her mild and tranquil faith required; but I knew another species of happiness—our European life; at least then I held it to be such. That gentle flower I took away with me to live under a foreign sky—under a foreign sun. She came with me gladly, but she was very pale when we crossed the broad endless salt waters; and it distressed her to be obliged to wash herself with the foul ship-water, and even to drink it. Her very soul was bound up in mine, and she knew it not; therefore I loved her more than tongue can express. I never did violence to her opinions or to her will, but gave them both free scope; and I listened with a fond smile when I saw how she confounded together my heart and her heart—my instruction and her childish Hindoo faith.

" After she had become my wife according to the

laws of my country, I took her to my castle. Before my departure I had commenced a building in the Grecian style, and this was completed by the time of our arrival: I named it the Parthenon, and fitted it up for our dwelling-house. It was a handsome building, and its interior furnished with splendour and magnificence, that she might become reconciled to her change of scene. A garden, too, was planted round it, and a hundred hands were kept daily at work there till it was finished. I raised walls and terraces in order to collect the sun's rays; I threw up ramparts to keep off the winds; I built rows of glass-houses for plants, and assembled together all that was dear and familiar to her: the loveliest flowers of her native land, the greenest shrubs, her favourite birds and animals; but alas! the dark blue heavens and the white peaks of the Himalaya mountains, these I could not transport; and the splendour of my dwelling was not like the splendour of her Indian sun.

“But she lived on—she never ate flesh; she barely endured that I should eat it, and thus stain myself with the blood of poor animals. She certainly would have respected me more if I could have resolved to live as she did, entirely on herbs, and fruit, and corn. Often in those days, during the first years of our union, when our life flowed on so monotonously,

—often when her lips hung upon mine, when her soft slight arms were wound closely round me, and when I looked into her large eyes and read within them a slow and painful longing—she knew not herself what deep and lingering disease was consuming her;—often at such times a voice spoke loudly in my ear, ‘Go back with her to India, she is dying of home-sickness;’ but my hard heart was entangled in its love for Europe, and would not see the truth, that I, the stronger, could and ought to have made the sacrifice which she, the weaker one, actually made; but could not endure. I would not listen to the voice till it was too late, till other events happened, and all,—all was over! Seest thou? the car of fate rolled on; but it passed over limbs too delicate to bear it, and she was crushed!

“I had a brother, Sixtus by name—a handsomer youth could scarcely be imagined; besides, he was gallant and gentle, and I loved him as part of myself. This brother had been travelling abroad for many years, and now came to spend a few months with us. And I saw immediately that he shrank back when he saw the beauty of my Chelion, and that the fever of love streamed suddenly into his poor, weak heart; but I trusted him and pitied him, and bore myself more kindly and affectionately towards him than ever; nay, I even bade Chelion

love him as a brother. I mistrusted him not, and yet there was often a whizzing of dark wings around my head, and a foreboding of misery came over me.

“He was accustomed to roam wildly over the mountains half the day, and sometimes to sit whole nights listening to the Eolian harp of Procopius. Meanwhile the period fixed for his departure was drawing nearer and nearer. But I felt oppressed and heavy-hearted, like a tropical forest over which the weight of invisible tempestuous elements is brooding, when the rainy season is fast approaching, and the sun still shines in the bright but dense blue of heaven.

“I had been on a journey, undertaken on account of a law-suit for the sake of that hateful Mammon which will ever rivet its chains upon us; I had been detained, and it was already late when I was riding homewards. It was a sultry night in July, dark, electric vapours hung over the mountain, whose peaks could in many places scarcely be distinguished from the black clouds. The soft white columns of the Parthenon I could not discern, but the blueish lightning that occasionally broke forth, illuminated the dusky ascent that hid it from me. And then and there it was that the demon of mistrust appeared to me! I rode desperately—once at home, all I thought would be well—but the faster I rode, the

more the whole mountain seemed to be enveloped by the clouds, and I could not reach it, alas! I could not reach it! And my horse too seemed to share my anguish, for he was not as usually when he scented his home, joyous and impatient,—he moaned, and his back was moist. Once, too, I fancied that I no longer heard the tread of my servant's horse, but when I stopped and looked back, his dark form was close behind me.

“All at once a bright, dazzling flash passed through the sky, the tower of Procopius stood radiant with its light, and my way still led upwards. The fir avenue received me, its trees were ranged like a wall on either side. Ruprecht, the son of my late castellan, opened the gates without my giving any sign of my approach; he seemed to have been waiting for me.

“‘Any news?’ I inquired.

“‘None,’ was his reply.

“I rode up the mountain. Everything was now wrapped in darkness. The stables were behind Julian's house, I threw the reins to my servant, and walked through the oak-wood towards the Parthenon, but on passing the left wing of old Count Sixtus' house, where my brother dwelt, and seeing lights within, I stopped and went in to greet him. The gate was open, the door leading to his apartment

was not barred, his servant was sleeping in the ante-chamber, but Sixtus, as usual, was not at home. I passed on through Chelion's Indian garden—Flashes of lightning were now again illuminating the heavens, playing more and more continually upon the white pillars of my house—it seemed to me that I saw, a figure gliding shadow-like along the corridor; 'Sixtus!' cried I—but the figure quickly passed behind the bushes, and no answer came—my teeth chattered, and I hurried on. The avalanche now hung suspended over me—a breath would suffice to make it fall—and this breath was not wanting, it came from the over-ready tongue of a woman. It was Bertha, the bride of Ruprecht, and my wife's attendant. She was standing most unaccountably at the portal of the Parthenon, and on perceiving me, cried out in what appeared to me the accents of terror, 'Count Sixtus!'

“ ‘ Woman, I am not Sixtus!’ I seized her by the arm as if to assure myself that the phantom had life, and then hurled her forwards so rudely into the brushwood that she screamed aloud. I went into the house, the door was on the latch although I had ordered it to be invariably locked at night-fall. I closed it, and passing softly, as though dreading the sound of my own footsteps, along the passages, ascended the stairs, and entered my own chamber.

There I stood still awhile, then I took several turns in the room, and arranged one or two things of no importance.

“There was an ancient sage under whom I had once studied the Healing Art—it was at the time when I sought happiness in Knowledge—he had penetrated deeper into the mysteries of Nature than any of his contemporaries. Oh! may that never again be discovered which was revealed to him, the secret of which was confided only to me! I speak of a bright, clear, liquid like water; he had obtained it from the blood of animals; only so much as the tenth part of a drop laid upon the tongue of any living creature—nay were his lips but touched with it—would cause an instantaneous, sweet, calm, happy death to cloud over his senses. We had once tried it upon a rabbit; well I remember how, after its tongue had been moistened therewith, its little head sunk backwards as in slumber, with all the symptoms of calm content, and thus it died. I had kept a portion of this deadly nectar in a silver chest with other precious things. I now drew forth the crystal flask, and pure and clear as from a mountain-spring, and brilliant as a hundred diamonds, did the fluid sparkle in the rays of my lamp.

“To chase away the deadly frost within me, I again took several turns in my room.

“Then stepping up to the cloth-covered side-door, I opened it, and entered the passage leading to Chelion’s apartments. A soft light streamed forth to meet me from the innermost chamber where she slept,—all the doors stood open, and through the high glass windows which separated the passage from the Indian Garden, flashed ceaselessly the noiseless lightning of heaven.

“Could she be sleeping?”

“I went on—through all the rooms I went, till I reached the last. I entered—a light rustling was heard—but it was only one of her gold pheasants which had perchance strolled in through the half-opened door which led into the garden, and now startled by my approach glided out again. And when it was gone I wished it back again, that pretty, shy, glittering creature, for I almost feared to be alone in the room with so many shadows round me. And Chelion was actually sleeping—I turned the screen away from the lamp, that its light might fall on the bed—like a timid child she lay asleep, pressing her face close into the pillow. Her hand, like a petal of the lotus-flower, lay on the white coverlet. Her mouth was closed—I gazed long on her rosy lips, and imagined I already saw that deadly fluid clinging to them—I thought, ‘Hast thou then brought the artless creature into

Europe, hast thou hastened home for this ?' and I shuddered at the thought as though a stranger had spoken it. I looked around me, but nothing could be seen save the long shadows on the floor—then I looked back at the spotless white linen amid which she lay, and a drop of sweet mercy stole into my eyes. I could not hear her breathing, but I marked it as it came and went—and I listened a long time till again I heard a rustling—I turned round—it was the pheasant, which, deceived perhaps by the stillness into the belief that I was gone, came back, striding forwards and nodding its head. I now went close up to my wife, and softly touched her hand—she moved, raised her eyelids, and looked at me with those sweet, wondering eyes, but there was no consciousness in them, and she suffered her eyelids again to sink down as if heavy with sleep.

“ ‘ Chelion,’ said I in a low tone.

The voice goes nearer to the heart than the form ; she started up, saying, ‘ Jodok, is it you ?’

“ ‘ Yes, my Chelion,’ I said again, almost more gently than before ; but she drew back, and looked tremblingly at me saying ‘ Jodok, thou wilt kill me.’

“ ‘ I kill thee, Chelion ?’

“ ‘ Yes, thou look'st so terrible.’

“ ‘ No, no, I will not be terrible,’ I said, and the

thought came, 'It is a happy, peaceful death!' A cold shudder ran through my nerves, and with a broken heart, I added, 'Chelion, get up and follow me out of this hot room—I will do thee no harm.'

" 'Yes but thou wilt,' she replied, 'and I will not stir; the red blood will flow down upon the white pillows, and stain them, then they will become red, and I shall be white, white as death—but I shall be at peace, with no more pain—I shall be like one of the white marble angels in thy church!' And her eye looked timidly round the room, as if seeking for a sword; the phial which I had placed upon a table she did not remark.

"And she went on: 'Thou art angry with me, Jodok, thou art angry with me, or thy dear eyes would not look at me thus strangely—and yet I have loved thee so,—oh ye Gods in the clouds of my fatherland! I have loved none but thee'—and she broke into a violent fit of sobbing.

" 'Chelion,' I cried 'do not rend my heart! turn to me only; tell me again, Chelion, that thou lovest none but me, then I will believe thee and be happy, for thou hast never told me a falsehood—thou art silent?—Chelion, do but speak!'

"But she went on sobbing as though she would weep her soul away. At last she grew calm, and

was able to answer. Heaven be praised who gave me strength to conquer my passion and listen calmly!

“ ‘Jodok,’ she said ‘I have never loved another; thou wilt believe me, and love me still, wilt thou not? and thou wilt let me breathe this air a little longer? it is so sweet to breathe.’

“ ‘Breathe on, breathe on,’ I cried, ‘now and for ever.’”

“And I seized the phial from the table, and hurried out to the doors leading to the hot-houses of the Indian Garden. They were partially open and the sultry atmosphere without increased the heat within them. The plants of her native land stood round in black groups, and seemed to look reproachfully upon me. I now reached the open air, there was silence on the mountain, yet I fancied I heard the tramp of horses below: I ascended from the valley of the Parthenon, and the wide heavens with their thousand curious eyes seemed looking and staring upon me. Black banners waved threateningly above me, and fiery tongues played here and there amid them. I hastened to the tower of Procopius—the hot summer air penetrating through my cloak; I hastily mounted higher and higher till I had reached the uppermost pinnacle. There I raised my arm, as if to rid myself of my burden of meditated crime, and hurled the phial into the

abyss—I listened and listened till I heard a low ringing sound as it broke upon the projecting stones below—and then I felt somewhat easier. I remained awhile upon the summit drinking in the ocean of air so thick and dark around me. And presently it seemed as though a light breeze had arisen, and was rustling coolingly among the trees. And it was so. The hard heavens had melted, and large drops rattled down upon the leaves.

“I now descended from my height, and hastened back to my Chelion’s room—she turned her sad eyes expectingly to me—I took her in my arms, kissed her throbbing forehead, and said, ‘Sleep on, sleep on in peace, I will always love thee fondly as my wife, as my own, my only child—I will tend thee more carefully than ever, that thou mayest forget the anguish of this night. Good night, dearest Chelion, good night!’

“She had suffered all this without making any answer. I would not torment her longer, and went up to my room, but a low, smothered sob still seemed to follow me.

“The next day, came a cool, bright morning. I learned that Count Sixtus, with the assistance of Ruprecht, who had been his constant companion in the chase, had hastened away that evening; he had taken leave of my wife some time before my arrival

which accounted for the outer-door being unlocked. I said nothing to Ruprecht, who I was aware was strongly attached to my brother, although he often eyed me with inquietude. I was glad that Sixtus was gone, very glad that he was gone.

“ When I next saw Chelion, she was crouching on the ground, pressing her favourite dove to her heart. And again I repeated to myself my oath to make her forget the anguish of the past night by a long life of love, if it were possible ever completely to obliterate that painful memory from the white, unspotted tablets of her heart.

“ But alas ! it could not be.

“ She had once seen me stand with a murderer’s glance and a murderer’s intent at her bed side, and that image never could be effaced from her soul. Formerly I had been to her as a protecting Angel, now she trembled before me. How could it be otherwise ? He who has once raised his arm to destroy one of his fellow-creatures, even though he may draw it back again, has forfeited his claim to their trust ; he has violated the laws of humanity, and may repeat the wanton attempt at any time.

“ For years did I labour at what was impossible, to restore everything to its former footing ; it could not be. Henceforward she was all humility, gentleness and self-devotion ; but one feeling was gone

for ever, worth more than all the rest—*confidence*. She never complained ; but she hung in my arms like the dove in the embrace of the falcon, resigned and prepared for everything—and the cold sun of the north shone upon her like my glance, neither of them imparting any life. Never after that night did the flush of health return to her face,—and thus one afternoon she died ; her failing eyes riveted upon me, as the poor animal gazes at the murderer whose ball has pierced its timid heart.

“ I was mad with grief when I saw her stretched before me—a cold, lifeless corpse—when I saw her lowered into her grave. I felt uncertain whether I should murder Bertha or Ruprecht, or whether I should not rather seek out Sixtus, and tear him limb from limb—but I did nothing of all this, for I received strength to conquer myself, and not atone for the old crime by committing a new one. Nor was vengeance slow in overtaking all those who had been instrumental in raising the deadly spirit of jealousy within me. Sixtus, when he heard of her death, shattered his brains with his own hand—the house of Ruprecht was visited by trouble and dissension ; Ruprecht reproached his wife ; Bertha grew sullen towards her husband and soon after died of an internal disease ; I, left a prey to remorse, shut up the Parthenon and all the other castles, dwelling

only in a single chamber ; the servants I dismissed—the plants I allowed to perish—the animals I fed and cherished till they all died, and then I buried them, one by one. Whatever was left of Chelion, every fragment of her dress, her pretty fancy articles, the flooring and the carpet upon which she had trod, the table at which she had sat, the bed wherein she had slept,—all these I guarded carefully that they might remain as they were on the day of her death. There was no human creature upon earth that loved me ; my son Christopher, the image of Chelion,—whether he had heard or guessed the misery I had caused his mother I know not—was away, and would not return. And as I grew older the relics preserved in the Parthenon filled me with horror and pity ; so I took some money which had been accumulating for some years and laid it aside as a compensation for the loss it would occasion to my heirs, and then set fire to the edifice in order that everything that was left of her and me might be consumed by the flames. It was a beautiful, a glorious, a heart-rending sight ! All this time I had never quitted the castle, had attempted nothing more, done nothing, bad or good. I now inhabit the small stone house that I have erected at the foot of the mountain, not because I would be a hermit, nor because I am worn down by sorrow—no ; but because it is

pleasant and right that a man should require nothing more than what he can himself procure. The birds that inhabit the bushes around me follow this simple fashion, and the dwellers in the straw-thatched cottages below do the same; they, however, foolishly deem it their misfortune. In my will, clause 13, is ordered 'A blue-silk curtain to be kept drawn over Chelion's portrait; also a monument of plain white marble to be placed over our common grave in the Indian Garden, with no inscription except the two names;' let this injunction be strictly obeyed. I have now collected a heap of papers as high as this table and intend to begin writing a History of the Perversities of the Human Race; also a History of its Glorious Deeds. But it is strange—I often cannot make up my mind what belongs to the former history, and what to the latter. I must be growing old, very old,—alas! I long for my son."

With these words the manuscript broke off. But on the margin of the last page was written by a stranger's hand; "✠ (died,) one and twenty days after writing the word *son*."

Alas! and thus must terminate every one of the scrolls that lie in the iron chests. When the writer said to himself, "to-morrow or the day after to-morrow, I will write again," on that morrow,

perchance, he was ill, and a few days afterwards, dead !

Henry arose and passed his hand over his brow. One manuscript had now been perused. Imagination pictured to him already the cross that a stranger's hand must at some future day add to his own last page, with "died after the word—— ;" what word would it be? perhaps "wife," or some other word now foreign to his vocabulary. He returned the parchments to their place, closed the windows so that again nothing more than the former mysterious twilight should fall upon the floor, and then went back into the open air, locking both the gates after him, according to the prescribed form.

"This was no good regulation of our fore-father's," thought he, as he passed along the path through the old garden which so many readers and writers had trodden before him. He could not follow that counsel which had bade him scatter to the winds the memory of all that he had read, but with a heavy heart, the noble form of Jodokus, who had wandered there not very long ago, still haunting him, he thought "with how many more have I yet to become acquainted till the whole garden is peopled with ghosts? And if all are like this Jodok, how little does their castle deserve the nickname with which the good folks of the neighbourhood

have stigmatized it;—the madness of these Scharnasts appears to me the result of an excess of susceptibility—I almost dread to learn the history of that venerable Procopius with the dark, bright, thirsting eyes, which were perhaps at last raised towards the stars only through despair. Or what may be told of Julianus, or of the first Sixtus,—or of the orphaned Christopher, with Narcissa, and Pia?—How know I what I shall be forced to tell of myself?”

Occupied with these and similar thoughts he passed through the gloomy oak-grove into the more open parts of the mountain, and here matters wore a more cheerful aspect. An architect came forward to meet him with a design in his hand, and pointed out what alterations he thought would be necessary. The work people rested a moment and raised their caps respectfully as he passed. The foundations of Jodok's hot-houses had been discovered, and also the frame-work of the glass, so that it would be an easy task to raise them again. Not far from the Parthenon a number of wheel-barrows were passing to and fro, laden with rubbish and bricks, and the columns, which had been carefully cleansed from the smoke, once again smiled brightly and tranquilly upon the green cradle-like valley in which they stood. On the roof of Christopher's house was perched

a workman, merrily whistling a song while engaged in patching up hole after hole. The ladders had already been taken down from the front walls, for there all had been done that was required; the windows were all clean and bright, the green silk curtains drawn up, and the mild summer air streamed pleasantly into the rooms. The surveyor of the interior now approached Henry to give an account of his proceedings. There was a famous noise of nailing and hammering going on in several of the apartments, which must be stopped before the gentlemen could hear themselves speak; other rooms were already completed, and the architect after carefully wiping his shoes, conducted Henry into them, and showed how that nothing was wanting save the costly cloths that should cover the tables, and the diamonds that must lurk like drops of light in the niches left for them. Henry then went on farther. The whole descent sloping down to the entrance gates resounded with the noise of shovels and axes, for the roads were being repaired, withered trunks and boughs removed. All was to be set in beautiful order as quickly as could be; other alterations, both useful and necessary, were already planned, but must bide their time and be done more gradually.

In the meantime there was in a far humbler habitation below the castle, and near the Pernitz, an

almost equal amount of bustle and business ; perfect mountains of snowy linen, and dresses, and attire of every description were filling up each corner of the house ; there were ornaments also, especially a wreath of brilliant jewels that lay sparkling in one little neat room on the upper story, whose windows had red marble ledges and were shaded by white muslin curtains.

And the whole country around was still employed in gossiping and wondering about Henry and his good fortune. Some envied him, others wished him joy. Some said he was in a most desperate hurry and could not wait a moment, but must needs be lord-ing it over the whole mountain, and making the most of his newly-acquired power. Others were kindly occupied in finding him out a suitable match from the best families in the neighbourhood, and wearied themselves with guessing and disputing ; they even went so far as to hazard various speculations on the subject, such as which of the daughters of the land would accept, and which refuse him. Nay, it was even whispered that, quite after the fashion of his fathers, he would stoop to his inferiors, and marry neither more nor less than an innkeeper's daughter.

But time passed on, and still the mystery was not cleared up. Henry, despite the opinion of these honest folks, was modest in everything he did or

undertook, and did not hurry his marriage till all was as he had wished it,—at last, however, arrived the long-looked for moment, when his intentions might be made public. In the church at Priglitz were announced one Sunday, according to the custom of the parish, the banns between “the worthy and virtuous bachelor, Henry of Rothenstein, our honoured Lord and Count, and the worthy and virtuous maiden, Anna, daughter of Erasmus and Margareta, tenants of the homestead No. 21, called the Green Fichtau,” &c. While this was read, Erasmus had trembled from head to foot, and his face was radiant with pride and delight; but his hour of triumph was after the service, when he stood prattling of his child, and her goodness, and her happiness, to a whole crowd of acquaintances, who gathered round him, and stormed him with questions. He had, indeed, lived to see the day when, as he had formerly somewhat presumptuously prophesied, all the whole Fichtau should lift up their hands in wonder. He alone of all his family had been in church that morning, that he might feast his ears with hearing the announcement. Simon the carrier, who had stood by in silent amazement, he invited to drive home with him, exclaiming, as he stepped into the carriage, “Now? now?”

“But we must receive it in humility, father

Erasmus, and enjoy it without haughtiness ! " was the sage rejoinder of his friend.

" To be sure, and so I do receive it in humility," returned Erasmus ; " but as for my being full of joy, that is no more than my duty as a father, and my duty to God who has ordered it to come to pass."

From the day of that announcement until the wedding, the grand subject of conversation was Anna's elevation, and how haughtily she would bear herself, and how triumphant she would be. But it was not so ; on the contrary, Anna could scarcely raise her eyes from the ground through modesty. The wide court of the Green Fichtau was thronged with spectators, as the hour approached when Henry was to lead her to the carriage, and all were to drive off to church. Her cheeks, as she passed through the crowd, were as crimson as though they were on fire, her eye-lids hung down heavily, and she dared not move them lest the tears should fall. All the young maidens in the Fichtau were assembled there, curious to see how she was dressed and what ornaments she wore. They must have been disappointed, for only a plain white silk robe floated round her form, and her hair was decorated with a very small green wreath and a white rose from the garden. She had left the precious stones in her room, it seemed to her almost a sin to

wear them on this occasion. Thus attired, Henry conducted her to the carriage, and as she passed through the throng, it was remarked that, of the hand which he held, scarcely two fingers had touched his, and that those two were trembling. The veil, too, which fell over her face and neck heaved to and fro with the quivering of every nerve; this was remarked when she stopped at the carriage-door, hesitating a moment before she entered it.

"That is a gentle bride," said a woman in the crowd.

"It is the gentlest, meekest, loveliest bride I have ever seen," said another.

And amid the whisperings and murmurings of the spectators, the most unequivocal signs of approbation might be overheard. Anna heard them, too, and became only the more confused: her lover handed her into the carriage, then seated himself between her and a venerable old lady whom nobody knew. It was Henry's mother. There were other carriages containing Erasmus, the smith, several neighbours from the Fichtau, and also strangers. Anna's mother was obliged to be lifted in, because in her confusion she could not find the carriage-step.

At last the whole procession started off for Priglitz. And now when all had passed the stone wall of Julius, the rejoicing that had hitherto been

restrained broke forth, and the mountain air resounded with exulting cries and shouts ; great indeed was the joy of these simple mountaineers now that one of their lords had chosen him a wife from their own ranks.

Anna, on her part, seemed overcome with awe ; for those same eyes that formerly, when he came home laden with plants and stones, had welcomed Henry so kindly, were not throughout the drive once raised towards him—but they wept almost unceasingly.

He did not speak to her, but he thought of Chelion, how that she even could have scarcely been as pure, as beautiful, as innocent as the sweet maiden by his side, and he tamed his heart lest it should break with joy and happiness.

When the ceremony was concluded and the carriages returned, a pleasant scene greeted their eyes. In the court of the Green Fichtau, where a hundred waggons might have been ranged, there now stood a hundred tables. The new Count had no grand family connections ; his guests were therefore all denizens of the Fichtau. They were his dependants, and thus in some manner his relatives. Those same wood-cutters and huntsmen with whom he used to chat on a Saturday evening, with many others of their class, sat round regaling themselves

with the best wine from the cellar of Erasmus, and the still better from old Ruprecht's casks. There, too, sat the peasantry of the mountains, and Henry and Anna among them. Erasmus took the place of honour, with Anna's mother on one side of him, and Henry's on the other ; but his chair was continually seen empty, for, according to old custom, he went round among the guests, as if even to-day he must serve everybody, and talked, and asked questions, and gave orders as usual. His great dog followed him, often laying his head familiarly on Henry's knees, or looking up with his great speaking eyes into his mistress' Anna's face. Next to the bride and bridegroom sat Robert and Trini, and Henry's sister. Simon the carrier could not be present—his business did not permit him ; but by way of compensation he received the privilege of holding his piece of land at Asang rent free. Gregory the herdsman, however, was there ; and his son and dog had received instructions to drive the herds home long before sunset, in order that they might not be deprived of their share in the pleasures of the evening, and every stray wanderer who passed that way was freely invited to join the party. At a little distance, or grouped here and there among the tables, were knots of young lads engaged in various sports, whilst others were assembled in a level plain beyond the garden, shooting

at the target, by way of preparation for the grand shooting matches that were to take place on the morrow and days following. And thus commenced, at the Green Fichtau, a mountain-festival that will not be forgotten so long as the Grahn shall stand.

Henry conversed with as many as he could ; he made the wood-cutters once again give him an account of their labours and adventures. He listened to the daring exploits of the huntsmen, and questioned many a peasant concerning the situation of his spot of ground, its management and productiveness ; and ere the mountains had begun to cast their shadows over the company he had won all hearts, and every one warmly congratulated the bride.

A brilliant and glorious evening, like the one we described at the commencement of this history, now gave lustre to the landscape ; the sun had vanished behind the woods, which threw their cooling shade over the Pernitz. The rocks behind the houses glowed with the richest and most varied hues, and an atmosphere like liquid gold floated over the green fir-crests.

And more and more solemnly did the twilight draw its veil around them, more and more softly murmured the waters of the Pernitz, more and more sweetly sounded the guitars.

But there was this difference between the present and the former evening ; viz., that the soft enlivening melody of the guitars summoned the young mountaineers, with their bold eagle glances, to lead the gentle, but bright-eyed maidens in the dance, and that the moon this evening shone much longer upon the houses before there was silence in the court of the Green Fichtau.

Next day when the shooting matches began, Henry conducted his young bride along with the most distinguished of his guests to his castle, and there installed her in the princely apartments of the Christopher building, just as Jodok in days of yore had conducted the innocent Chelion into the Parthenon. Erasmus was very proud, that on that same morning before daybreak, five waggons laden with Anna's goods and chattels, were despatched for Rothenstein; he might say that his child was the richest bride in the Fichtau, for even the great miller at Asang could not fill five heavy waggons with his only daughter's property.

But we will abstain from describing the ceremonies at Rothenstein, and prefer concluding our tale with this pleasant contrast to the melancholy histories of the Red-stone, and with the hope that the marriage which has so happily begun will continue happy.

And the few years that have elapsed since the events we have been relating, have indeed been happy ones. A range of conservatories, filled with plants of every clime, stands beside the Parthenon, and near them halls crowded with stuffed animals, and cases containing specimens of different kinds of earth and minerals. This passion of their lord, the mountaineers ascribe to the madness he has inherited from his forefathers, but they are obliged to allow that he is incessantly at work, and that for others more than for himself. In the noble lady who walks about with her two fine boys, none would recognize Anna of the Green Fichtau, for, under Henry's teaching, she has become a half miracle; but a perfect miracle stands beside her, a young girl beautiful as an angel, and as pure and gentle-looking—it is Pia, the daughter of Narcissa and the unhappy Count Christopher. Henry adopted her for his own child, as soon as he could draw her and old Ruprecht from the porter's lodge, where they had taken refuge at his arrival, and gradually accustom-ed them to his mode of life. Through a strange freak of nature, Pia has grown like her grandmother Chelion, and at the same time like her grandfather Jodok, so that, judging from the portraits, she might be taken for their child, only she is not so dark as Chelion, and much lovelier than the

portrait, but this is perhaps to be ascribed to her extreme youth.

The picture of Sixtus II. now stands publicly in the saloon, beside Henry's and Anna's, and every one who visits Rothenstein may convince himself of the perfect resemblance between Henry and Sixtus.

Old Ruprecht is still living. He is continually sitting out in the sun, fumbling at his staff with his fingers, smiling and telling stories which nobody can understand; he fancies he is still castellan, although another occupies a new lodge built close to the grand entrance.

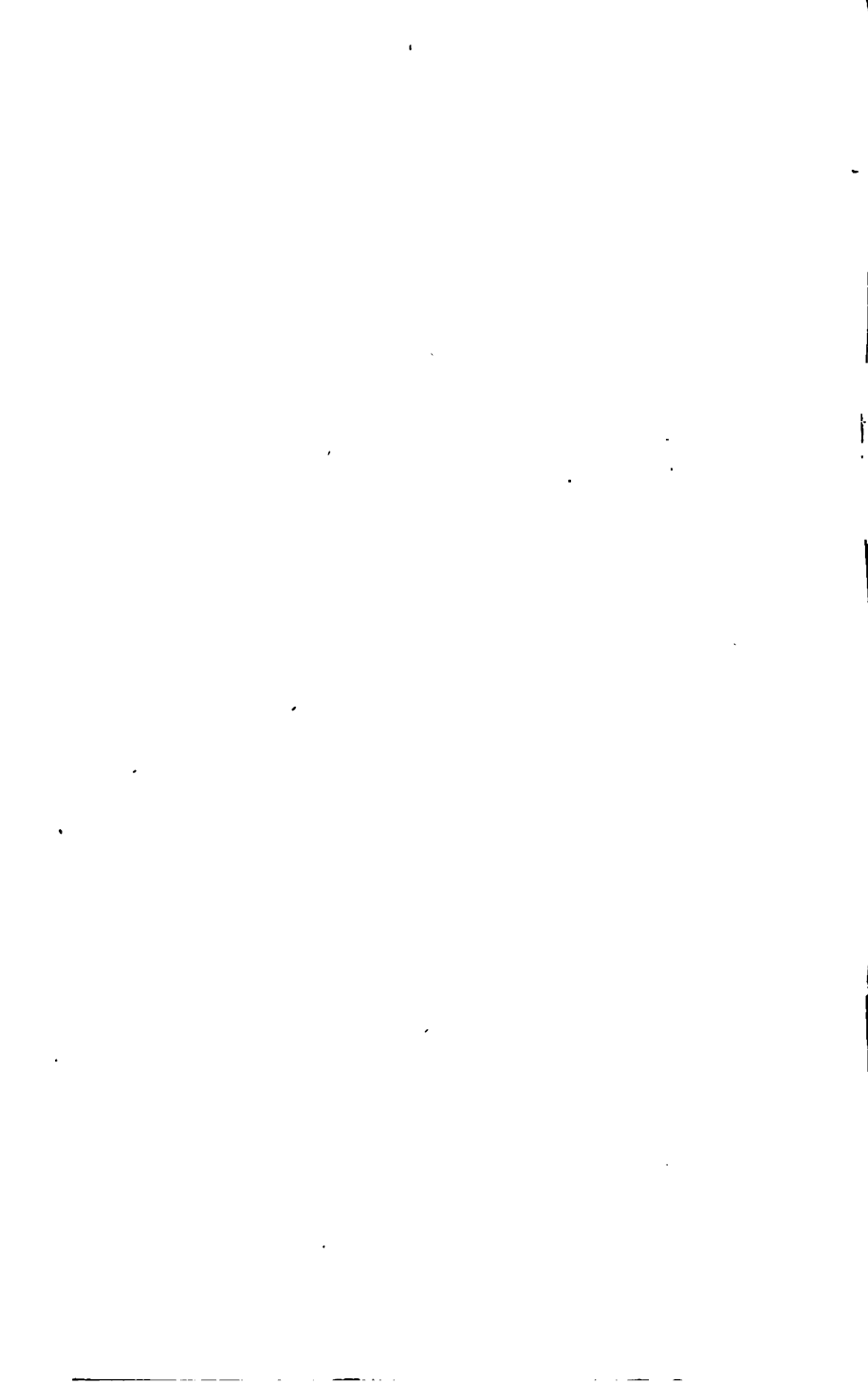
Many visitors come to the mountain, and many eyes rest admiringly upon Pia, but she shuns strangers, as she formerly shunned the two friends, when for the first time they caught a glimpse of her striding over the balustrades of Julian's house. But the most frequent and most welcome visitors are Robert and Trini. Henry's mother and sister live at the castle.

The valley of the Fichtau is as it always has been, and as it will be a hundred years to come.

Following the example of the smith, who still says "My son-in-law, the Town Clerk," father Erasmus as constantly refers to "My son-in-law, our honoured Lord Count."

And now, happy pair, farewell ! May you be blessed yourselves, and confer blessings on others, to the end of your lives.

As soon as anything is revealed of the other autobiographies in the Red Stone, belonging to Julian, Christopher, or Procopius, it shall be made public forthwith.



MAROSHELY.

CHAPTER I.

WANDERINGS IN THE STEPPES.

THERE are many things in human life which are not immediately clear to us, which work upon us suddenly and mysteriously, and, on the whole, pleasantly, yet how, we know not. For instance, in the face of a person decidedly ugly, we often fancy we have discovered a hidden beauty, although we cannot at the moment ascribe the secret charm to any moral worth in the character; whilst, on the contrary, another set of features, universally acknowledged to be moulded in faultless symmetry, will appear to us cold and unlovely. Thus we often feel ourselves irresistibly attracted to one of whom we have no actual knowledge—his manner, his every motion pleases us indescribably; we are sad when we lose sight of him, we feel a sort of yearning, nay,

even love for him, whenever we think of him in after years ; whereas another, whose worth has been incontestably proved to us by his actions, fails to excite the least interest, and we never truly sympathize with him, although he has been known to us for years. That there is in reality a good and sufficient cause for every such apparent caprice in our affections, a cause which the heart feels instinctively without understanding it, is beyond all doubt. Psychology has explained many similar mysteries, but as many are still left in their ancient, unapproached obscurity. And I believe it is not saying too much to affirm that there is in every human soul a deep, measureless abyss, in whose clear atmosphere God and spirits move unseen. In rare moments of unearthly joy, or sorrow, our human consciousness is transported beyond the barriers commonly severing it from that purer region ; Poesy too is at times wafted thither unawares, but Science with her hammer and measuring line must ever be content to remain without the boundaries.

These reflections were suggested to me on the occasion of a visit I once paid in early life to a certain Major Bathory, at his country estate. It was at a time when I was possessed by an insatiable passion for travel, wandering restlessly to and fro

over the face of the earth, thirsting to encounter fresh adventures, to acquire fresh knowledge.

I had, during my travels, become acquainted with the Major, and he then repeatedly invited me to visit him in his home. But the like invitations are frequently exchanged among travellers in mere courtesy, and I should probably have regarded his in that light, had I not received, in the second year after we had parted, a letter repeating his former request, urging me to come and spend with him a summer, a year, five, or even ten years, just as it might please me. For, he added, he had now finally determined to tread no other soil than that of his native land, and to remain, during the rest of his life, on the one little spot of earth that formed his home, where indeed he had lately discovered an object which he had sought in vain throughout the whole wide world.

It was now the spring season, and I was undetermined whither I should travel next; moreover, I was curious to learn what this object could be, of which the Major spoke, I therefore resolved to accept his invitation.

His estate was in Eastern Hungary. I had never visited that country, and for two days busied myself with plans and charts, considering what route would

be preferable. On the third day I was seated in a post-chaise, rolling towards the east, my fancy teeming with images of heaths and forests, and on the eighth, I was already wandering over an Hungarian *puszta*, desolate, indeed, yet with that sublimity in its desolation as only Hungary can show.

The free air of the boundless space around fanned my cheek and breathed new vigour into my limbs, the faint fragrance of the vast steppes greeted me on every side, and perfect solitude cast its mysterious charm upon the whole scene. At first my whole soul was engrossed by the simple grandeur of the wild, primeval nature that surrounded me—but when the next day, and the next, offered nothing new, still nothing upon which to rest the eye, save the faint, delicate ring which encircled heaven and earth,

“The bridal of the earth and sky,”

the mind unconsciously grew accustomed to the novelty, the eye became satiated to weariness, and this very vacancy seemed an unendurable burden. The spirit now retired into its inner chambers to brood over its own hidden world, and while the sunbeams sported among the glittering grasses, various thoughts, born of solitude, careered through

the soul, old memories swept crowdingly across the heath, and amongst them the image of him whom I now sought—I entertained it gladly, and during my solitary wanderings, I had abundance of time to recall to mind the several details I had heard concerning my Hungarian friend, and to try to reconcile them one with another.

It was in Lower Italy, among plains almost as vast and solemn as this through which I was now travelling, that I saw him first. He was then much sought after in all societies, and although not far off fifty years of age, was still looked on with admiration, by many a pair of bright eyes, for never was seen one whose figure and countenance were more perfect models of manly beauty, nor one whose bearing and conversation more fully corresponded to these exterior advantages. There was a species of calm majesty about him, so simple and attractive as to compel the respect and esteem even of his own sex—upon the fair, so it was reported, the charm was irresistible. But one fault there was ascribed to him which made his intimacy positively dangerous, and this was, that whatever power he might acquire over the minds and affections of others, his own heart remained free, so that none of those whom he had made happy with his society had

sufficient influence to retain him a day longer than suited himself. Preserving the same winning cordiality and suavity of manner to the last minute, he would suddenly take leave of his friends, and start again on his travels, never to return.

Another mysterious charm which heightened the interest inspired by this man was, that no one knew precisely his birth-place or lineage, or what rank he held among his fellow-men, moreover, several insisted that his brow was clouded by a veil of melancholy, doubtless to be attributed to some mournful, perhaps criminal, event in his past history. And this mystery which nobody could solve, this unknown Past, was the most potent of all his fascinations. He was said to have been involved in political intrigues—to have married unhappily—to have shot his brother in a duel—and many other like stories were afloat concerning him. One thing was known for certain, viz. that he was now most zealously occupied in scientific researches.

I had heard so much of the Major that I immediately recognised him when one day I saw him for the first time on Mount Vesuvius breaking off stones, and afterwards walking up to the new crater and gazing on the blue curling smoke which still rose in a thin column from the cleft. I walked over

the yellow, shining clods to the spot where he stood, and addressed him. He answered readily, and we soon entered into conversation. A fearful, dark wilderness was around us, looking all the more wild and rugged from its contrast with the calm, deep-blue, southern sky spanned above it, and into which the thin cloud of smoke issuing from the volcano slowly melted. We spoke together some time, then parted, and each of us returned alone from the mountain to his lodging.

Again we met by chance, we exchanged visits, and at last became almost inseparable. Upon a more intimate acquaintance, I discovered his mind to be not only imaginative and ardent, but at the same time most child-like and unsophisticated. He was perfectly unconscious of his own rare endowments, and in all simplicity gave expression to the most original thoughts, nor have I ever in the course of my life, even during the time when I had frequent intercourse with poets and artists, found in any one so keen a sense of beauty, and such a shrinking from deformity of any kind as was observable in him. Probably, it was this which rendered his society so acceptable to the other sex, especially as such an intuitive perception of the beautiful is very rarely found in men advanced in years. I could not per-

ceive anything of that sadness which was said to be seated on his brow, nor did I learn more of his earlier life than that he had spent much of it in travelling, but had now lived for several years at Naples, where he was collecting lava and antiquities. That he had possessions in Hungary he told me of his own accord, and, as I have said, repeatedly invited me to visit him there.

We lived together for some time, and, when at last I left the place, we separated with regret. But afterwards, so many successive images of countries and men crowded upon my memory that I should never even have dreamed of crossing an Hungarian heath in order to visit this man, as was now actually the case. And when I painted his image more and more vividly in my mind, I became so absorbed by my recollections that I could often imagine myself again in Italy. The plain over which I now wandered was hot and silent as the Neapolitan waste, where we had first met; and the blue vapours in the distance formed themselves into a resemblance of the Pompeian marshes.

I did not proceed direct towards the Major's estate, but diverged several times into cross-roads, and by-ways for the sake of seeing more of the country. I crossed a hundred streams and rivers,

I frequently slept with herdsmen and their shaggy-coated dogs ; I slaked my thirst at many of those solitary heath-brooks, with their fearfully high stakes pointing up to the sky, and I ate my supper under many a slanting, reed-covered roof. Here I met the bag-piper, there the carrier ; yonder gleamed the white mantle of the *csikos* or horse-herdsman. Often did I amuse myself in wondering how my friend would look in this country, for hitherto I had only seen him in society, in the crowded saloon, where all men are in appearance alike, resembling each other as much as the pebbles round a brook. There he was the polished, refined man of the world—but here all was different, and often when I saw nothing the whole day long save the distant purple glimmer of the steppe with the thousand little white points that dotted it, to wit, the cattle, and the deep black mould under my feet, the thought continually recurred, “How will he assort with this rude waste, so luxuriant in its wildness, so primeval and uncultured, despite its history, its ancient renown ?” I wandered about the country, I tried more and more to identify myself with its inhabitants, to conform to its peculiar modes and customs, and often have I imagined myself listening to the clang of that hammer wherewith

the Future of this nation shall be forged. For everything throughout the land points forward to a time yet to come ; all in it belonging to the Past is decaying and crumbling away, all that is new appears vigorous and full of life ; and thus I looked with pleasure on its endless villages, its vine-clad hills, its marshes and reedy fens, and its soft blue mountain-ridges far beyond.

One day, after a month's wanderings, I believed myself actually in the neighbourhood of my friend's estate, and, being somewhat weary of my long pilgrimage, I resolved to proceed at once to the habitation of my future host. I had during the whole afternoon been traversing a hot, stony field ; to the left, distant blue mountain-crests rose up into the sky,—I supposed them the Carpathian,—to the right lay a tract of broken ground with that reddish tint peculiar to the steppes, and between extended the vast plain over which I was journeying. At last, just as I had ascended from a deep hollow—the bed of a sun-dried brook—there rose up to view on my right hand a chestnut grove, and a white house, which had hitherto been concealed by a sand-reef. “Three miles, three miles,”—such had been the invariable answer throughout that whole afternoon, every time that I had inquired, “how far from

Uwar?"—the name of the Major's residence—always "three miles:" but as I now knew by sad experience what Hungarian miles were, I was certain each time that the three would prove to be five, and I wished right fervently that this house might bear the name of Uwar. At no great distance there were fields sloping upwards to a mound of earth, where I saw some labourers, and, determining to inquire of them, I commenced making my way through an angle of the chestnut-grove. And now I found what indeed, being by this time instructed in the manifold optical illusions so common in this country, I had suspected from the first, namely, that the house did not stand in the grove, but farther on, beyond a plain extending from the chestnut-trees. Evidently it was a very large building. Presently, however, I saw a figure galloping across this plain straight to the fields where the labourers were, and as it approached them they gathered around, as around a master. But I could not persuade myself that the unknown form bore any resemblance to my friend Major Bathory, and I went slowly toward the ascent, which proved to be farther off than I had thought, reaching it just when the crimson glory of evening was glowing around the dark waving fields of maize, the group of bearded peasants, and the

horseman. And the horseman proved to be a woman, about forty years of age, who, strangely enough, wore the *gatyá* or loose white trousers peculiar to Hungarians, and was seated astride on her horse like a man. As the labourers soon dispersed, and she was left almost alone, I addressed myself to her. I placed my wanderer's staff under my knapsack in order to support it, and shading my face with my hand from the beams of the evening sun, which fell slantingly upon me, I looked up to her and said in German, "Good evening, Mother."

"Good evening," she replied, in the same language.

"Do me the favour to tell me whether yon building is called Uwar?"

"Yon building is not called Uwar. Are you bound to Uwar?"

"Certainly. I am going to visit Major Bathory, who is an old fellow-traveller of mine, and who has invited me to come to him there."

"Then walk a little way beside my horse."

With these words she rode on slowly, so that I could follow her, between the tall green maize bushes, up the ascent. I walked behind her, and took the opportunity of surveying the neighbourhood around—and indeed I found more and more cause

for pleasure and surprise. As we advanced higher, the valley beyond opened upon us, a boundless forest-garden extended from the castle to the mountains behind it, avenues led up to the fields, and one scene of husbandry after another presented itself to view, all in excellent order and condition. Never before had I seen maize with such a long, fresh, succulent leaf, and not a blade of grass had intruded itself between the stalks. The vine-hill, the verge of which we had just reached, reminded me of those in the Rhine-country, but I had seen neither leaves nor grapes so fresh and vigorous there as here. The plain between the chestnuts and the castle was a meadow, green and soft as velvet, but with hedged ways cut through it, where grazed the white cattle of the country, all slender and sleek as deer. All this was in striking contrast with the stony field which I had journeyed over that day, and which now lay beyond, the red evening rays falling upon its surface and thus rendering its aspect more hot and dry in comparison with the cool, fresh verdure.

Meantime we had reached one of those white cottages which I had descried scattered among the green of the vines, and my conductress said to a young man who was at work in front of the cottage,

and habited, despite the warmth of a June evening, in a sheep-skin :

“ Milosch, this gentleman wishes to reach Uwar to-night, take the two brown ponies, give him one, and accompany him as far as the gallows.”

“ Yes,” replied the lad, starting up.

“ Now go with him, he will direct you right,” said the woman ; and she turned her horse in order to ride back that part of the way she had come with me.

I took her to be a kind of shepherdess, and would have given her a piece of money for the service she had rendered me. But she only laughed in reply, thus displaying a row of very beautiful teeth. She rode slowly down through the vineyard, and soon after we heard the quick tramp of her horse as she galloped over the plain.

I put back my money and turned to Milosch, who having covered his head with a broad hat, now led the way through the vineyard till we came to a bend in the valley where were some out-farms. Here he brought out two of those small-sized horses which are met with on the heaths of this country. Mine he saddled ; the other he mounted without farther ceremony, and forthwith we started, and rode off in the evening twilight towards the dark, easterly

heavens. It must have been a singular picture ; the German wanderer with his knapsack, knotty staff, and cap, on horseback, and by his side the slender Hungarian with his round hat, mustachios, sheepskin cloak, and fluttering white trowsers, both riding on through the dark night and solitary desert. For a desert in truth was the open tract which received us after we had passed the vineyards ; and the well-cultured settlement we had just left seemed like enchanted ground amid the wide waste. In fact, I could have imagined myself again in the stony field I had crossed that afternoon, so like was it, had not the dull red, still glowing in the sky behind me, proved that we were actually directing our course to the east.

“ How far is it still to Uwar ? ” I asked.

“ There is a mile and a half more,” answered Milosch.

Submitting as patiently as I could to stern necessity, I rode on. We passed the same numberless grey stones, such as I had counted by thousands during the day ; they glimmered with a false light upon the dark soil ; and as we were careering over a dry, firm moorland, I heard not the hoof-tramp of the horses, save when sometimes the iron struck upon one of these stones—usually these animals, well-accustomed to such ways, carefully avoided them.

The ground was very even, except that two or three times we had to descend and re-ascend the sides of deep trenches, at the bottom of which lay a dry stream of pebbles.

"To whom does the settlement we have just passed belong?" I inquired of my conductor.

"Maroshely," replied he.

He spoke very rapidly, still riding on in front of me, and thus I could not be sure whether this were really the name of the proprietor, or whether I had not rightly understood him, it being difficult either to speak or to hear.

At last the moon arose, and in its faint light the slender outline of a scaffold stood revealed upon the heath.

"There are the gallows," said Milosch; "down below, where you see a glistening light, runs a brook, beside which there appears a black heap; go up to it; it is the oak on which evil-doers used to be hanged. Now that is done no longer, because there are gallows. A road leads from the oak with young trees growing on either side. Go on by that road for somewhat less than an hour, then pull the bell-handle of the iron gate. Remember, if the gate be unclosed, not to go in at once, on account of the dogs, but pull the bell-handle. So, now get down,

and wrap your coat closer about you, or you will get the fever."

I dismounted, and notwithstanding my ill-success with the shepherdess, I repeated my offer of money to Milosch. He took it, and put it in his sheepskin; then he snatched at the bridle of my horse, turned, and flew away ere I had time to bid him convey my thanks to the owner of the horse which I had so courteously been allowed to ride through the night.

I looked before me. There stood two pillars with a cross-beam, above it was something like a head; but whether it were really such, I could not tell. I walked farther; the blades of grass growing on the heath behind me seemed whispering one to another; and I could have fancied that something was moving at the foot of the gallows. Presently I came to the Oak of the Dead. The rippling brook glistened and curled amid its margin of rushes like a dead serpent; beside it the old tree rose blackly into the sky. I walked round it, and found on the opposite side a straight, white road, lighted up by the moon. There was a ditch on each side, and an avenue of young poplars. It was pleasant to me to hear once more the sound of my own footsteps, as though I were on the roads of my own country.

I walked slowly on. The moon rose higher and

higher, and at last stood bright in the warm summer sky. The heath lay like a pale-coloured disk beneath it. At last, after a full hour had elapsed, some black forms, like the trees of a forest or garden, rose up before me, and presently the road led up to an iron grating and wall, behind which were the trees, their giant crests, still as death, pointing up into the silvery moonlit atmosphere. There was a bell-handle at the grating. I pulled it, and could hear the clear, shrill ringing from within. Immediately afterwards I heard, not a chorus of barking, but two of those deep, resolute and eager snorts peculiar to the nobler sort of canine creatures; then there was a heavy bound, and the very largest and handsomest bull-dog that I have ever seen stood at the inner side of the grating. He raised himself on his hind legs, and resting his paws upon the iron rails, gazed upon me gravely, without making the least noise, as is the usual habit of these animals. And now appeared two smaller dogs of the same species, growling and bounding about, and all three continued to gaze at me with undiminished curiosity and vigilance; after awhile I heard footsteps approaching, and a man clad in a shaggy coat of skins came up and asked what I wanted. In reply I inquired whether I was at Uwar, and gave my name,

upon which he immediately quieted the dogs with a few words spoken in Hungarian, and then opened the grating.

"My master has received letters from you, and has been expecting you a long time," said the man as I entered.

"I wrote word to him that I wished to see something of your country first," was my reply.

"And you must have seen a great deal of it by this time," said he.

"Certainly, I have," I returned. "Is the Major to be seen to-night?"

"He is not at home just now : he is attending the sessions, but he will ride over here early to-morrow morning. There are three apartments prepared for you ; and we have received directions to conduct you to them on your arrival."

"Come, then, show me into them."

"I will."

These were the only sentences we exchanged during our long walk through what seemed to me rather a forest than a garden. Gigantic pines pointed towards the heavens, and immense oaks stretched out their long arms in all directions. When we had made our way through the grove we came out upon an eminence entirely clear of trees, and upon

which stood the castle. It was, as far as I could see, a large, square building; a broad flight of steps, bright with the moonlight, led up the eminence, beyond was a smooth court, and then a large grating which served as a gate to the house. On reaching this grating, my conductor spoke a few words to the dogs, upon which they darted back into the garden. He then opened the grating, and led me into the building.

There were lights burning on the staircase so as to illuminate tall, strange-looking stone figures, with wide boots and trailing garments. They could only be the statues of Hungarian kings. On the first floor we were received by a long corridor carpeted with reed-matting. We passed along this corridor, and then ascended another high staircase leading to another corridor, which having gained, my conductor opened one of the folding-doors to which it led, and announced to me that here were the apartments destined for my use. We went in. After lighting several wax tapers in each room, he wished me good night, and left me. Presently wine, bread, and cold meat were brought in by another servant, who likewise bade me good night and departed. I judged that I was now to be left alone, and, therefore, went up to the doors and closed them.

I took some supper, measuring my new abode with my eyes the while. The first room was very spacious. The tapers burned brightly, and lighted up everything around. The furniture was very different to that which we are accustomed to see in our own land. In the centre of the room was a long table, at one end of which the repast was spread ; round it were placed rude benches of oaken wood, with here and there a chair. Against the walls hung a variety of weapons, evidently belonging to various epochs of historical renown, but all of Hungarian fashioning. Among them were a great number of bows and arrows ; there were also garments as well as arms, some of which had perchance been worn in Hungary in days of yore, and were now preserved as relics of antiquity, and also some loosely hanging silk vestments, which apparently had belonged either to Turks or Tartars.

After despatching my supper I went into the two adjoining rooms. They were smaller ; and, as I had observed when I was shown into them, more comfortably fitted up than the saloon. There were chairs, tables, chests, washing-stands, writing-desks, and everything that a solitary wanderer could desire. Even books lay on the dressing-table, all in the German tongue. In each of the two chambers

stood a bed, over which was spread as a coverlet that national article of dress called a *bunda* ; this same *bunda* being a mantle of sheepskins, whereof the rough side is turned within, the smooth white leather worn without ; and the outside is frequently ornamented with straps of variously coloured cloth or leather fantastically embroidered in arabesque devices.

Before going to rest I went up to the window to look out, as is my wont in a strange place. There was not much to be seen ; the moonlight, however, made it evident that the landscape was not a German landscape. Like one gigantic *bunda* lay the dark piece of forest, or garden-land, stretched over the steppe ; beyond lay the shifting grey of the heath ; then came a variety of streaks, I knew not whether they were earthly objects or clouds.

After I had gazed awhile, I turned away, shut the windows, undressed, and lay down.

As I drew the soft skin of the *bunda* over my wearied limbs, and closed my eyelids, I said to myself : " Now am I ready and impatient to encounter whatever measure of weal or woe may await me in this dwelling."

Then I fell asleep, and was soon alike insensible to all the occurrences of my past life, and all my eager anticipations for the future.

CHAPTER II.

HOME AMONG THE STEPPES.

How long I slept, I know not, but my sleep was not sound and refreshing. My over-fatigue must have been the cause. The whole night long I was walking about Vesuvius, and watching the Major, who was now sitting in Pompeii, habited in a pilgrim's dress, now standing among heaps of lava, looking for stones. The neighing of horses and barking of dogs mingled with my morning's dream ; I then slept soundly for some time, and when I awoke, it was broad daylight, and I looked out from my couch into the saloon, where the arms and clothes were hanging in the sun's rays. The dark plantation without seemed alive with the various notes of the birds ; I arose from my bed, and going up to one of the windows, saw the heath beneath sparkling in a net-work of sunbeams.

I had scarcely dressed when there was a knock at

my door. I opened it, and my travelling-friend entered. I had been long curious to see how his appearance would harmonize with Hungarian scenery, and now that he actually stood before me, his figure corresponded so entirely with the aspect of the whole neighbourhood, that I could scarcely fancy but that I had always seen him thus. He wore on his upper lip the customary mustachio, which served to render his eyes still more sparkling and expressive, a broad, round hat covered his head, and from his loins fell the loose, white trousers. His costume appeared to me so charming, that I felt quite disgusted with my own German coat, which lay dusty and way-worn on a bench, under the faded silk scarf of some old Tartar chief, and looking miserably shabby and mean in comparison. His coat was shorter than is usually worn in Germany, but it agreed well with the rest of his attire. My friend certainly seemed to have grown older, for his hair was sprinkled with grey, and his countenance was furrowed with those short, delicate lines which indicate age in men, with well-formed features, and in whom the appearance of youth has been preserved longer than usual. But he seemed to me quite as agreeable and winning as ever.

He greeted me very kindly, very heartily, even



affectionately ; and at the end of half an hour's talk we were as familiar as ever. It almost seemed as though we had not parted since our Italian tour. Upon my remarking, while dressing, that I expected a trunk to arrive with the rest of my wardrobe, he proposed that till then, or, if I liked, as long as I stayed with him, I should adopt the Hungarian costume. I agreed, and the necessary articles of attire were forthwith brought into my apartment. And thus equipped, I went with my host down into the court, where we were met by a number of servants, all similarly clad, and looking up at us with a smile from under their dark mustachios and bushy eyebrows. Horses were then brought us for our morning ride.

We made a circuit of the Major's estate, followed by the large dog. The park, which we rode through first, was a pleasant wilderness, and yet kept in order, having good roads cut through it. On emerging from this wilderness, the fields greeted us, waving in the darkest, most luxuriant green. Nowhere else, except in England, had I seen such fields ; in England, however, methought the grass had appeared finer, more delicate ; here it was more luxuriant, more penetrated by the sun. We rode up a smooth ascent at the back of the park, and on

the ridge of this ascent, which led towards the heath, vines were cultivated. Everywhere their leaf was broad and dark ; the plantations covered a wide piece of ground, peach-trees grew in all parts of it, and here and there, as in the plantation I had seen on the previous night, gleamed the white points of the guard-houses. On the heath were seen, scattered about, the Major's cattle, a large, almost innumerable herd. An hour's ride further brought us to the stables and sheepfolds. While crossing the heath, my host pointed to a narrow black strip, far out in the west, streaking the wittory grey of the steppe, and said, " Yonder are the vine-hills of Maroshely, whence you had the horses yesterday."

We rode back another way, and he then showed me his gardens, orchards, and conservatories. Before reaching these, we passed a piece of marshy ground, where a great number of men were employed. In answer to my inquiries, he told me that these were beggars and vagabonds of various descriptions, whom he had, by paying them punctually, induced to work for him. They were now draining this marsh, and preparing to make a road through it.

At mid-day, when we returned home, we ate with all the servants and labourers, in a sort of outer-hall, or rather an immense pent-house, in the midst of

which stood a gigantic nut-tree. Meanwhile, there appeared, at the wooden paling surrounding the well, a tribe of wandering gipsies, who entertained us with their wild music.

There was a stranger also dining with us that day, a youth who interested me greatly by his extraordinary beauty. He had brought letters from the neighbourhood, and rode away immediately after dinner. The Major treated him with great respect and affection.

The whole of the hot afternoon we spent in-doors, in the cool rooms. In the evening, my host took me to the heath, to see the sunset. After he had counselled me to put on, as he did, a sheepskin, as a safeguard against the noxious air of the plain, little as the warm temperature now prevailing seemed to require it, we rode alone to the spot he had fixed on, and there waited till the sun had set. And in truth it was a glorious spectacle that succeeded! Above the dark surface of the heath was suspended, like a golden cupola, the flaming heavens, so dazzlingly magnificent and glorious that every thing on earth seemed black in comparison. A single blade of heath-grass stood up like a dark beam against the celestial splendour, a tiny insect crawling over it drew a strange black figure upon the

golden ground, and the poor stunted juniper and sloe-bushes were transformed into distant domes and palaces. But in a few minutes the damp, cold blue of night began to rise in the east, its dull impalpable vapour cutting through the inimitable glories of the heavenly cupola.

This appearance lasts longest in the month of June, when the sun stands high. After we had returned home, had taken our evening meal, and I had retired to my sleeping-room—it was already nearly midnight—I saw, on standing at the window, that a pale yellow strip of light was still lingering in the west, whilst in the east the red disk of the crescent moon was glowing in a sea of blue.

I determined that evening to take the first opportunity which might present itself, to question the Major respecting that object in life which he had told me in his letter, he had at last found, and which must bind him to his home for the remainder of his days.

Another morning dawned; he awoke me before sunrise, and asked me whether I would spend the day by myself, or with him. It should always be open to me to do either. If I chose to share his labours, I had only to rise at the sound of the bells which were rung in the court every morning, and join him

at the common breakfast. But whenever I should have plans of my own for the day, his people would supply me with horses, with attendance, or whatever else was necessary. Only he would rather, whenever I purposed making an excursion of any length, I should let him know beforehand, so that he might caution me against any perilous roads, or other petty inconveniences to which I might be subjected. I thanked him for his consideration, and declared that, for the present at least, I wished nothing better than to spend my time in his company.

I then arose, dressed, and repaired to the breakfast under the pent-house. The servants had most of them finished, and were dispersing to their several occupations, the Major had waited for me. After breakfast the horses were brought ready saddled.

As he had already shown me his estate, he told me that he would now ride round to direct the necessary business of the day, and that I should look on so long as it did not weary me.

We went first to some meadow-lands, where hay-making was going on. The beautiful Hungarian brown that the Major rode, bore him gallantly over the soft, newly-shorn turf. He dismounted,

whilst one of the labourers held his horse, and looked at the hay-ricks. The man observed that it must all be got in this afternoon. The Major ordered that several ditches should be made in these meadows, to carry off the superfluous moisture. From the meadow he took me to the conservatories, which were not, as usually, close to the house, but at some distance, on a gentle slope, which lay open to the south and east. There was a stable attached to these conservatories, where the Major and whoever should accompany him might leave their horses; for it often happened that he was detained there a long time, nay, even several hours, when visitors who wished to see all his arrangements were with him. We led our horses, saddled, into the stable; and he proceeded first to inspect certain slips and cuttings of plants, which were to be sent to divers people at a distance, at their own request; he then went into the gardener's room, and spent some time writing at the table. Meanwhile I looked at all that surrounded me, and concerning which I knew about as much, and as little, as a traveller who is incessantly journeying from place to place, and has seen conservatories innumerable, can be expected to know. But, afterwards, when, in my friend's library, I examined several works on botany, and collections

of prints, I began to discover that I really knew nothing of the pith and kernel of the matter.

On coming out of the gardener's room, the Major stopped to speak to a party of women, who were busied in wiping the dust from the green leaves of the camellias. These plants were then very rare and expensive. Hence we passed on to the many neat, white sand-beds of the conservatories, where grew the very young plants and shoots; and hence to all the flowers and vegetables which he had undertaken to cultivate. At the opposite entrance of the conservatories we found our horses waiting, one of the gardener's boys having led them round to meet us. Here I noticed places for preparing and mixing different kinds of earth, some of which had been brought in panniers, upon donkeys, from distant provinces, especially from the pine districts. There were also places set apart for burning these earths, and close by was piled up the wood to be used for heating the conservatories in the ensuing winter.

We now rode out upon the heath. Our slender, fleet-footed steeds quickly bore us through the fragrant morning air of the lonely plain, so far that the castle and park were left behind, like a dark spot in the distance. Soon we met the herdsmen. A few

logs, put together so slightly that they could not have been good for much in the way of affording either protection or shelter, formed a hut, or rather, perhaps, a sort of signal which might be easily discerned, and used as a guide across the steppe. Under this scanty roofing burned, or rather glimmered, a fire, which was fed by the tough boughs or roots of the junipers, sloe-bushes, and other stunted shrubs. Here the herdsmen were preparing their meal. Eleven o'clock is their dinner hour. A group of tawny figures, clad in dirty-white trousers, and full-sleeved shirts, their sheep-skin coats lying near them on the earth, gathered round the Major and answered his questions. Others, who had perceived his approach afar off from different parts of the wide flats, came galloping to the spot, on their little mean-looking horses, without saddle or covering of any kind, and often with only a rope, instead of bridle or halter. These men then dismounted, still holding their horses, and surrounded the Major, who had also dismounted, and given his horse to be held. They spoke to him, not only of their occupations, but of other matters, and he, on his part, knew nearly all of them by name, and was as familiar and kind as though he had been quite one of themselves. And it was this, as I imagined,

which had enkindled such devotion to their master among these men.

As upon the mountains with us, the cattle here were left in the open air all the summer long. The Major's cattle were of that white, long-horned kind so commonly found in Hungary, pastured on the herbs of the steppe, whose spice-like fragrance seems so remarkable to us mountaineers. The men who have the charge of these herds, remain, like them, day and night in the open air, and often have no other shelter than the starry heavens above them, often only a few logs, as in this place, or a mud-hovel. They now stood before the Major, their lord, as they call him here, and received his directions. When he was remounting, one of the group, his bright eyes flashing out from his swarthy features and bushy brows, held his horse, whilst another with long hair and thick mustachios, stooped down to hold his stirrup.

"Fare ye well, my children," said he, on riding off, "I shall visit you again soon, and when our neighbours come, we will lie upon the heath some afternoon, and eat with you."

He spoke these words in Hungarian, but at my request, repeated them to me in German.

Whilst riding back, he said, "Should you at

any time like to make a closer acquaintance with these heath-dwellers, and wish to come here and take up your abode with them, you must beware of their dogs. They are not always so tame and patient as you have seen them to-day—they can be very rough in their behaviour. So you must give me notice beforehand, that I may accompany you, or at least send with you some well-known herdsman, whom the dogs love, to be your guide.”

I had, indeed, whilst we were lingering among the herdsmen, admired their unusually large, slender, shaggy dogs, never having met with such throughout my wanderings, and was amused to see them sit so composedly among us round the fire, as though they understood something of the conversation, and could take part in it when they chose.

We now returned to the castle, for mid-day was fast approaching. When, as on the previous day, we passed the marshy ground which the people were employed in draining, he pointed out to me a field of wheat hard by, where the ears appeared singularly fine, saying, “This good plot of ground, if it does its duty, will supply me with the means of planting other fields in like manner. The people on the waste land yonder work there the whole year. They have wages given them, cook their food in the open

air, and sleep in those wooden huts. In winter, when the ground is covered with ice, they go down to the lower places, which now we cannot reach on account of the excessive moisture, and roll into them masses of dry earth from the heath, and stones taken from the vine plantations."

I looked at the wooden huts to which he had pointed, and could distinguish a thin column of smoke ascending from divers parts of the heath-ridge, and showing the scattered tribe where their dinner was being cooked.

As we entered the park, the dogs joyfully bounding upon us, we heard the bell from the house summoning us and the rest of the household to dinner.

The afternoon was passed as usual at home, save that about five o'clock, the Major drove out, whither I knew not, over the highway shaded by the avenue of poplars, which I had traversed the night of my arrival. Meanwhile, I occupied myself with reading, my host having ordered a number of books to be conveyed from the library to my rooms.

I did not that evening question my old travelling friend concerning his newly-found object, as I had so firmly intended on the night preceding.

The following day the Major was much engaged

in writing, and I spent nearly the whole morning in looking at those of his horses which he kept near the house and making acquaintance with his people.

On the day after, I went with him to the sheepfolds, which were at the distance of a two hours' ride, and there we remained a long time. He has some very intelligent men among his shepherds, who, like himself, take a real interest in their business. I also observed here, that every department of his domestic or farming labours has its separate purse, for he now advanced to the sheepfolds a sum taken from another stock. The accounts referring to this loan were very correctly and minutely set down.

Another time I visited his stud, and we went together to the pastures where the colts and young horses of a commoner breed were, like the cattle, tended by herdsmen.

In this manner I became gradually acquainted with the whole sphere of his activity. The care and attention he devoted to all he undertook was the more surprising to me, because I had formerly known him as an enthusiast in poetry and the more abstruse sciences, rather than as a practical man of business.

"I believe," said he to me on one occasion, "that to cultivate the earth is the best preparation

for civilizing and developing the energies of its inhabitants. Our constitution, like our history, is very ancient, yet much remains to be done. This wide land is a richer treasure-chamber than might at first glance be imagined; but it must be more studied, and better comprehended ere its hidden wealth can be brought to light. You must have noticed yourself, whilst on your journey to Uwar, that these wild heaths cover a rich, black soil, which might well be converted into arable land, and afford good pasture. Then look at these hills, full of glistening stones, extending as far as yonder blue mountains which you see rising northwards—there lurks, half-hidden amid the dark clods of earth, the flashing brightness of metals. Two very noble rivers flow through our land; above them the motionless air is, as it were, calmly awaiting the countless myriads of many-coloured pennons which shall hereafter float in it. Different nations dwell in this country—many of them are still in their infancy, and must, like children, be taught—must have examples for imitation set before them. Since I have lived in the midst of my own people, over whom I have, perhaps, more real claim to authority than you may think,—since I have gone in and out among them, have put on their dress, adopted their

customs, and won their respect, I have in truth discovered a source of happiness which I had sought in vain in foreign climes."

There was no longer any need to inquire of my friend concerning the "object" alluded to in his letter.

He had especially applied himself to the cultivation of different kinds of grain. And his corn stood so thick, so full and beautiful, that I looked forward with eager interest to the time when the ears would ripen, and the year's harvest be carried home.

These rural occupations, and the quiet energy with which they were carried on, reminded me continually of the ancient Romans, who loved agriculture so well, and who, in the early days of their simplicity and their strength, preferred the tranquillity of a country life to the excitement of cities.

"How natural, and how beautiful," thought I, "is the vocation of the countryman, when he understands it rightly. Its simplicity and variety, its intimate communion with pure, passionless nature, renders human life such as it is represented in fable to have been during the golden age—almost like the life of our first parents in Paradise."

And when I had been for some time at Uwar, and had begun to understand and watch with lively interest all that was going on there ; the calm, uniform course of days and weeks with their ever-recurring occupations, made me feel so thoroughly happy and at home, that I had almost forgotten our town life, and thought of its excitements and bustle as altogether trivial and unimportant.

Once, after having been on the heath among the herdsmen and others, the Major said to me, when driving home—for on this occasion he had had four of the spirited black horses from the heath harnessed with thongs of studded leather to a carriage, which rolled securely over the turf—

“ These men would readily shed their blood for me, were I only to summon them, and place myself at their head. They are unconditionally devoted to me. And the others, too, the servants and labourers at home, would sooner suffer their limbs to be torn asunder than that a hair of my head should be harmed. And yet, look you, I did not come among them till my head was already growing grey, and after having neglected them for years. What a trust is this ! to guide hundreds and thousands of human beings, and to guide them aright ; for when they are thus devoted to their leader they

are for the most part like children, and follow him blindly, whether for good or evil."

"Once," he went on after a pause, "once I believed that it was in my power to become an artist, or a man of science. But I soon perceived that he whose vocation it is to awaken the emotions of men, should be earnest in prompting them to virtue and heroism—in inspiring them with a love of what is holy as well as beautiful; and that the student in science should make it his task to discover those hidden secrets of Nature which may benefit or at least enrich mankind. But in either case, simplicity and greatness of mind are both indispensable; and as I can boast of neither of these qualities, I gave up the delusive idea, and now the wish also is gone."

I fancied as he spoke that a momentary shadow passed over his brow, and that his eye kindled with his former enthusiasm; as in the time when we sat together on the *Epomeo* with a whole sea of celestial blue around us, and the waves glittering below, he unfolding the while all the wishes and dreams of a heart still young despite its experience of the world. And now a doubt suddenly shot across me whether the happiness he professed to have found were really so perfect or so true as he wished to believe.

This was the only time he had ever referred to his past life when conversing with me. And I, on my part, asked no more questions than I had during our former acquaintance in Italy. Any one who travels much soon learns to be forbearing towards his fellow-men ; and to refrain from seeking to pry into their hidden life unless the veil is voluntarily withdrawn. I had now been a tolerably long time at Uwar, and it pleased me to be there, as I not only regarded with interest the domestic and agricultural labours around me, but sometimes even took an active part in them ; moreover, at intervals I amused myself with writing in my traveller's diary. Still I believed I could discern that in the background of the Major's present blameless and active life, there lay something which darkened his mental atmosphere even now, and I imagined it to be some deep sorrow, which, in a manly nature like his, would naturally express itself only in a grave, uniform tranquillity.

Yet, throughout his entire intercourse with me, no one could be more unaffected and straightforward ; he seemed not to have an atom of dissimulation, or even reserve. Thus, for instance, on the table in his writing-room, where I went very often, and where we spent many a sultry afternoon, or sat talking in

the evening by candle-light before going to rest, there lay a picture in a handsome gilt frame : it was a miniature-portrait of a young lady of about twenty, or perhaps two-and-twenty years of age ; but, strange enough, however skilfully the artist might have tried to soften down all defects, the face portrayed was not handsome, but decidedly plain—the dark complexion, the features, and the formation of the forehead were strikingly peculiar ; something of strength and energy might, however, be traced in them, and the glance of the eye was wild and resolute. That this young lady had played an important part in my friend's earlier life was clear to me ; and the thought which had so often been suggested to me in Italy : “ Why should this man never have married ? ” recurred now with double force ; but true to my principles, I made no remark.

The picture might be left with perfect security upon the table, for none of his people ever entered the writing-room ; whenever any of them wished to speak to him they came into the ante-chamber, rang a bell on entering, and then waited till he came out to them. Visitors he always received in a different part of the house. It was, therefore, as a special mark of confidence that I was admitted into this room, and suffered to look at everything lying

around. And this confidence I probably owed to my habit of never asking questions, or seeking to gain that information which was withheld.

But now the harvest time had arrived, and never shall I forget that cheerful and pleasant season.

The Major occasionally made short excursions in the neighbourhood, and generally invited me to accompany him. In no country are the distances between inhabited spots so wide as here; the inconvenience is not, however, great, as these distances are soon traversed either by riding on the fleet-footed horses, or driving in light vehicles over the heathland. On one occasion the Major was attired in the close-fitting Hungarian national uniform; the dress suited him well; and with his sword by his side, he looked really magnificent. Another time I went with him to a county assembly, where he made a speech in the Hungarian language, which was received by one party with vehement applause—by the other with equally vehement disapprobation. As I had caught up something of the ancient Magyar tongue from the Major's people, I could understand a good deal of this speech; however, whilst driving home, he translated the whole into German for me. On the afternoon of that same day, at dinner, he was habited as I had seen him in Italy,

in the ordinary European dress, most others of the assembly having in like manner laid aside their national costume.

I also accompanied him in certain visits which he paid in the neighbourhood: I thus learned that there were four such estates as the Major's. A sort of alliance had been entered into a few years previous, the members of which had agreed to do all in their power for the promotion and encouragement of agricultural improvements, themselves setting the example by industriously cultivating their own estates to the utmost, in the hope that, when others saw the increase of wealth and comfort produced by such a course, they would also direct their attention to the attainment of the same results. This society had its laws, and occasionally held agricultural meetings. The owners of the four large estates were, at present, its only members, but several lesser proprietors had begun to imitate the proceedings of their lordly neighbours; and all these were allowed to be present at the meetings, not only as hearers, but as counsellors, provided only that they announced their name and intention beforehand. And, indeed, these lesser proprietors took no unimportant part in the debates, as I found on the occasion of a large assembly held at Gömör's

house, which is about four hours' ride from Uwar, and at which none of the members of the union, beside Gömör himself and the Major, were present.

I went afterwards alone to see Gömör, and on my second visit spent several days with him.

When the harvest-time was nearly ended, the Major said to me one day, "As we shall now have a little leisure, we will next week pay a visit to my neighbour, Brigitta Maroshely: in her, you will become acquainted with the most high-minded woman upon the face of the earth."

Two days after this promise, he presented to me Brigitta's son, who had accidentally ridden over. He proved to be the very same young man who had dined with us on the first day of my stay at Uwar, and whose singular beauty had struck me so much. This time he spent nearly the whole day with us, and accompanied us to different parts of the estate. He was very young, having scarcely reached the transition-point between boyhood and youth, and he pleased me exceedingly. His soft dark eyes were full of expression; and, as he sat on horseback, there was something in his bearing so ardent, and yet so humble, that my whole soul yearned towards him. I had a friend not unlike to him, who, while still in the fulness of youth and hope, was borne

away to sleep in the cold grave. Gustavus, for this was the name of Brigitta's son, brought him vividly to my remembrance.

Ever since the Major had spoken so highly of Brigitta, and more especially since I had known Gustavus to be her son, I had felt anxious to be introduced to her.

Whilst staying with Gömör, I learnt some few particulars of the past life of my friend, for Gömör is, like most Hungarians, very open and free-spoken, and thus he told me, unasked, all he knew. According to his account, Major Bathory was not born in this district. He was said to be descended from a very wealthy family, and, since his youth, had been travelling almost incessantly, no one knew where, neither was it known in what service he had risen to the rank of Major. He had never been to Uwar in his early life, but had made his appearance there for the first time a few years ago, when he established his abode there and joined the agricultural alliance. At that time there were only two members, Gömör himself and Brigitta Maroshely, who had merely determined to concur in adopting a better system of husbandry than had hitherto been attempted in this desolate region. It was in fact, Gömör went on to relate, Brigitta who

first set the example. Not possessing any exterior attractions, her husband, a gay, thoughtless young man, to whom she had been married in early youth, had in a sudden freak deserted her and never returned. She had then repaired to her estate of Maroshely with her child, assumed man's attire, and applied herself to agricultural pursuits, continuing to this day to dress and ride like a man. She directed her servants and peasantry, was exceedingly active, and employed herself from morning to night. People might see here what could be effected by persevering industry, for she had almost worked miracles on the stony plain. Since he, Gömör, had known her, he had attempted to imitate her, and to carry out similar plans upon his own estate, nor had he ever repented it. The Major, he continued, had never visited her until several years after he had settled at Uwar; when Brigitta being seized with a mortal sickness, he immediately rode over the heath to see her, and restored her to health. And from that time he had visited her constantly. People said that he had a knowledge of magnetism and had applied its mysterious powers of healing in her case, but this was mere idle talk; no one really knew what had taken place, only that a singularly fervent attachment and frequent intercourse had arisen be-

tween them in consequence. Now, that Brigitta was quite capable of exciting, as well as feeling, the highest degree of friendship, there was no doubt, but how far the ardent passion which the Major had conceived for this woman, unpleasing as she was in person, and already declining in years, was natural, was another question,—and that he did entertain a passion for her was certain, and was admitted by every one. No doubt the Major would marry Brigitta if he could,—it was known to be a great grief to him that he could not—but as nothing was ever heard of her runaway husband, there could be no certificate either of death or divorce produced to facilitate their union. All this, Gömör concluded, spoke much in Brigitta's favour, and to the shame of her husband, that he should have thus wantonly forsaken a woman whom another man, infinitely his superior, would give worlds to call his own.

Thus much had Gömör told me respecting the Major and Brigitta, and several times had I met Gustavus in the vicinity, ere the day fixed for our ride to his mother's arrived.

On the evening before this day, whilst the thousand-voiced chirp of the heath-grasshoppers still fell upon my ears, I thought much of her, and when overpowered with weariness I fell asleep, her image

still haunted me. One dream especially recurred again and again. I fancied myself standing on the heath before the strange woman in man's attire, who had lent me the horses ; that I was transfixed to the spot, spell-bound through the magic of her beautiful eyes ; that I could not stir hand or foot ; that all my life-long I should never be able to tear myself away from that spot of heath-ground. At last I fell into a sound sleep, awoke next morning fresh and strong, the horses were led out, and I rejoiced in the thought that I should now see, face to face, her who had been so strangely present in my dreams.

CHAPTER III.

BRIGITTA.

BEFORE I proceed to describe how we rode to Maroshely, how I was made acquainted with Brigitta, and repeatedly visited her, it is necessary, in order to be intelligible, that I should relate some part of her earlier life. How I arrived at such an intimate knowledge of the circumstances to be detailed, will not appear strange when my unreserved intercourse both with the Major and Brigitta is considered.

A marvellous gift has been bestowed upon the human race,—the gift of beauty. We are all attracted by it, yet can scarcely explain wherein it consists. The features may be shaped conformably with all the laws of symmetry, and yet possess it not ; or again, it may not be acknowledged because its sweetness is wasted on the desert air, and the eye which could discern and render it homage has

not beheld it—often beauty is imagined and idolatrously worshipped in a face where it is not—but there can it never fail to be, where a heart throbs with fervour and transport, or where two souls meet in holy union ; for without it the heart will not throb, and pure love cannot exist. It is in the nature of man to bow down before its influence, neither does his thralldom degrade him ; for all that can bless and elevate life does this mighty power pour into the human heart. Sad indeed it is for her who possesses it not, or is unconscious of its possession, or in whom the eye of another has never found it. Even the mother turns instinctively away from her child when she fails to discover in its features the very faintest sparkle of that light of life.

And thus had it been with the child Brigitta. When, soon after her birth, she was brought to her mother's arms, that mother could not see in her the beautiful angel she was ready to press to her heart. And, afterwards, as she lay in the pretty, ornamented cradle, the snow-white linen nestled round a tiny face, dark of hue, and unpleasing as though an evil spirit had breathed blightingly upon it. Unconsciously, perhaps, the mother averted her eyes to rest them upon two fair little cherubs who

were frolicking on the rich carpet of the chamber. When strangers came, they bestowed neither praise nor blame upon the child, but inquired for her sisters. The child grew. The father often passed through the room, but without taking any notice of his new-born daughter; and when the mother sometimes caressed her other children more fondly than ever, as though in despair, she saw not Briggitta's deep-set black eyes riveted upon her, as though the tiny infant already felt the neglect. When she cried, her wants were attended to; when she was quiet, she was left to lie unnoticed; all were occupied with their own concerns, and she fixed her large eyes upon the gilding of the cradle, or the figures of the tapestry on the walls. When the cradle had become too narrow a dwelling for her, she used to sit in a corner by herself, playing with pebbles, and repeating sounds which no one had taught her, and as she grew stronger and more adventurous in her play, she often rolled her large, wild-looking eyes as boys do, when in imagination they are already enacting glorious deeds. She repulsed her sisters whenever they attempted to interfere in her games, and when her mother, in a paroxysm of repentant love and compassion, now took the little creature in her arms, and bathed her

cheeks with tears, she showed nothing like pleasure, but wept and strove to disengage herself from the embrace. Her mother naturally felt aggrieved at this; she did not understand how that the little roots of Brigitta's childish heart, having first sought the warm soil of maternal affection, and found no welcome, had been forced to strike deeper and deeper into the rock of self-love.

And thus the cold desert surrounding her grew wider.

As the children advanced in years, and gay dresses were sent home for them, Brigitta's were always considered to do well enough, while those of her sisters were altered again and again till they fitted exactly. The others had rules for their behaviour, praise and encouragement given them; she never received so much as blame, not even when she had soiled or torn her dress. And when they had lessons assigned them, and the hours of the forenoon were spent in study, she sat among them, her really beautiful dark eyes, the only attraction that she possessed, staring upon the corner of the book in the tutor's hand or at the map spread out before him, and if the tutor suddenly put a question to her she would shrink back and give no answer. But during the long

evenings, or at other times when the rest were sitting in the saloon engaged perhaps with company, and nobody missed her, she would lie upon the ground in the midst of a heap of old books, pictures, and tattered maps which no one else cared for, probably brooding over the strange, chaotic world within herself. The key being always left in the bookcase, she had read nearly half of her father's books before any one was aware of it. Most of them she could not possibly have understood. But there were loose papers with wild fantastic figures drawn upon them, occasionally picked up, and these papers must have been hers.

When the children had grown into girlhood, she stood among the rest like an exotic plant. Her sisters were delicate and beautiful; she was strong though slender. There was, indeed, almost masculine strength in her limbs, as was seen when her sisters came about her, and disturbed her, whether in teasing, or caressing, and she would quietly put them aside with her slight arm—and still more plainly was it shown in the pleasure she took in putting her hand to menial labour and working till the heat-drops stood upon her forehead. She never learnt music, but she rode excellently well, and as boldly as a man, and she would often lie in her gayest

dress upon the turf of the garden, talking to, and haranguing the foliage and bushes around her.

At last her father began to chide her for her silent and repulsive carriage. But his reproaches had the effect of making her far more silent and reserved than ever. Nor did her mother's representations and admonitions avail any more; it was in vain that she now gave vent to angry displeasure, now wrung her hands in impotent bitterness. The young girl refused to speak at all.

If there had been but one, only one, who had an eye to penetrate the depths of that misapprehended soul and discern its beauty, one to have told her that she need not despise herself!—But there was none, those who surrounded her had not the skill, neither had she.

Her father lived in the capital, and in a style of great splendour. When his daughters were introduced into society, the fame of their beauty spread through the land, many were curious to see them, and the gay parties and assemblies at their house became more numerous and animated than ever. Many a heart thirsted to call the priceless jewels this house harboured their own,—but the “jewels” cared little for that, they were,

perhaps, as yet too young to understand such homage. However, they gave themselves up the more to the pleasures which society brought them, and a ball-dress or the arrangements for a fête could supply them with the most exciting and absorbing occupation for whole days together. Brigitta, as the youngest, was not consulted on these occasions, as though she could not understand the matter. Sometimes she was present, and then she always wore a full, black silk dress, which she had made herself; sometimes she avoided the scene of festivity and spent the time in her chamber—how she spent it no one cared to ask.

Thus a few more years passed on.

At last there arrived in the metropolis a young man whose appearance excited no little interest in the various circles of society. His name was Stephen Murai. His father had brought him up in the country that he might be the better fitted to spend his life there. After passing through the usual course of study, he had been sent abroad into foreign lands, and on his return his father desired that he should become acquainted with the best society his native land could offer him. And to this end he now came to the capital. Here he quickly became the almost exclusive topic of conversation. Some

praised his understanding, others his deportment and his modesty; others again declared him to be the very handsomest man they had ever met. Several maintained that he was a genius, and, as of course, there was no lack of those who would fain depreciate his merit if they could, many asserted that there was something wild and shy about him, and that it might be easily seen that he had been bred up in the forest. To this, too, it was generously added that he was not only excessively proud, but deceitful; and of this many instances were adduced, notwithstanding which many a young girl longed to see him, were it but for once.

Brigitta's father knew young Murai's family well, in his earlier years he had visited at their estate in the country, and had only given up intercourse with them since he had been living altogether in the metropolis, whither they never came. After he had made certain inquiries respecting the extent of their possessions, and had ascertained that they were more valuable than ever, he decided in his mind that if this new-comer were as much to his taste in person and manners as in his fortune, he could nowhere find a more desirable bridegroom for one of his daughters. And as many other fathers and mothers were of the same opinion, Brigitta's father lost no time, but

determined to get the start of them. Accordingly he invited the young man to his house, the invitation was readily accepted, and Murai came several times to evening parties. Brigitta, however, had not seen him, as of late she had entirely absented herself from these parties.

Once she went to a sort of fête given by her uncle. In her younger years she had often gone not unwillingly to her uncle's house, and on this occasion, as he had especially pressed her to come, she had consented. That evening she sat amid the crowded assembly, wearing her usual black silk robe, and a head-dress of her own fashioning, and which her sisters pronounced to be frightful. Certainly, such another head-gear could not have been found throughout the city, but it harmonized well with her dark complexion.

There were a great many people present, and on looking across a group that had gathered near her, she saw two mild, expressive eyes gazing intently upon her. She immediately looked another way, but when afterwards she again glanced in the same direction she saw that those eyes were still fixed upon her. It was Stephen Murai who thus looked at her.

About a week after this, there was a ball given

at her father's house. Murai had again been invited, and arrived rather late, when most of the company had already assembled, and the dancing had begun. He looked on, and when they were preparing for the second dance, he went up to Brigitta, and very modestly asked her to be his partner. She replied that she had never learned to dance. He bowed, and again mixed with the bystanders. Presently he too was seen dancing. Brigitta seated herself behind a table on a sofa, and watched all that went on. Murai talked now to this, now to another young girl, danced and laughed with them all. He was allowed to be unusually pleasant and attractive this evening. At last the entertainment was over, the party dispersed, and all sought their respective homes. But Brigitta, when she had retired to her sleeping-chamber—she had by repeated entreaties wrung from her parents the privilege of sleeping in a room by herself—and had begun to undress, glanced at the mirror as she passed it, and watched the vision of her own swarthy brow with the raven hair braided across, as it glided by. Then she unrobed herself, for she would never permit any attendant to help her either by night or day, went up to her bed, threw back the snow-white linen from her couch, which she always chose

to have made as hard as possible, lay down upon it, supported her head with her slender arm, and gazed with sleepless eyes upon the ceiling of the chamber.

As there were now more parties than ever, and Brigitta no longer avoided them, she was again singled out by Murai. As before, he always greeted her very respectfully, and brought her shawl when she rose to leave. And when she was gone, the wheels of his carriage were heard immediately afterwards bearing him homewards.

This lasted for a long time.

Once, when she was at her uncle's, and in order to escape the intense heat of the saloon, had stepped out upon the balcony, she heard Murai's step and saw through the darkness around her, that he had placed himself close by her side. He made only a few general observations, but an attentive listener might have detected something of tremor in his voice. He spoke in praise of night, and said that gross injustice was done her; that she was not only most beautiful but beneficent; that her influence was most powerful to soothe and comfort the heart. He ceased speaking, and Brigitta too remained silent. When she returned to the saloon he followed her, and stood for a long time at a window, as if in reverie.

When Brigitta retired to her chamber that night, and had taken off, one after another, the various articles of her festive attire, she went in her night-dress up to the mirror, and gazed into it a long, long time. Tears swelled to her eyes—she did not wipe them away, they did not dry up but gave place to others which forced themselves forth and streamed down her face. They were the first tears of bitterness, wrung from her very soul, that she had ever shed. She wept more and more vehemently; it was as though she had to weep for her whole past unloved, unloving life; as though her heart would feel lightened of an unendurable weight when she had wept over it all. As was frequently her wont, she had sunk upon her knees and sat back upon her feet. On the ground beside her chanced to lie a little picture—it was a child's picture, representing one brother sacrificing himself for another; this picture she pressed to her lips till it was tattered and wet through.

When, at last, the fountain of her tears was exhausted, and the wax tapers had burnt down, she was still sitting on the ground, in front of her dressing-table, like a wearied child. Her hands lay in her lap, the folds and borders of her night-dress were moist, and hung ungracefully about her neck.

She gradually grew quieter, and could think more calmly. At last she fetched a deep breath, passed the palm of her hand across her eye-lashes, and got into bed. But, as she lay there, in the dim light of the night lamp, which stood behind a shade, she still repeated to herself the words, "It is not possible, no, it is not possible!"

Then she fell asleep.

From that time Murai's attentions to her were more and more marked, but his manner was shy and diffident, almost timid. He scarcely spoke to her, and she, on her part, made not the slightest advance to him.

When, after a while, another opportunity occurred of speaking to her alone,—many such had been suffered to pass away,—he at last took courage to address her, and said, that he could not but believe that she was favourably inclined towards him, and, if it were so, he had one petition to make, viz., that she would try to know him;—perhaps, he was not utterly unworthy of her attention, perhaps, he might possess, or at least be able to acquire, qualities which would win him her esteem, if not something still higher and holier, as he ardently desired.

"No, Murai," she replied, "oh, no! do not think me inclined. But I too have a request to

make to you.—Do not so, do it not; do not woo me, you would repent it.”

“ Why should I, Brigitta, why should I ? ”

“ Because,” she returned, in a very low voice, “ because I can never be satisfied with any but the very highest kind of love. I know that I am ugly, and therefore it is that I require a higher degree of love than the fairest maiden on earth; I feel that it must be infinite, without measure or end: now, you see, this is impossible, therefore you must not woo me. You are the only one who has ever asked whether I have a heart,—you I cannot deceive.”

She would have said more, perhaps, had not some people approached them, but her lips quivered with anguish.

That Murai, instead of being repelled by her words, became the more attached, can easily be understood. He revered her as an angel of light, he stood apart from her, but his eyes passed carelessly over the beautiful features of those surrounding him, and sought hers. And thus it continued. And she too, her orphaned soul no longer left to prey upon itself, was now agitated by the hitherto unimagined power and intensity of a growing passion. It revealed itself openly in both. Conjec-

tures, apparently incredible, were whispered in society, and, as these conjectures were confirmed, the talk and wonderment increased, the consternation was unconcealed. Murai himself made no attempt at concealment. One day he and Brigitta were alone in a small inner apartment, he standing beside her, yet not speaking a word, whilst the music was wafted in from the adjoining room. Suddenly he seized her hand, and gently drew her towards him,—she made no resistance—she suffered him to bend his face nearer and nearer,—his lips to touch her hand—that hand which had never before felt the warm pressure of affection, not even from mother or sisters.

The veil separating the two was now withdrawn ; in a few days Brigitta was known to be the affianced bride of Murai, the favoured child of fortune. The parents, on both sides, had given their consent. And now began a delightful interchange of thought and feeling ; a new and warm life sprang up in the heart of the young girl, hitherto so grievously misapprehended, so neglected. The instinct which had attracted Murai to her had not deceived him ; she was high-minded and pure. As her heart and mind had not been enervated by the premature indulgence of idle love-dreams, a

fresh, unexhausted life, breathed in her soul. And there was a peculiar charm in her society, for, having hitherto lived alone, she had created a world for herself, into which Murai was now admitted. But, as the treasures of this unexplored region were unfolded to him more and more, that which rendered the possession invaluable, was the warm and fervent love, which, like a golden river, flowed through its deep unseen channels, no lesser streams and rivulets weakening its force; for, whereas the hearts of most human beings are shared among half a world of other hearts, hers had always remained solitary, only one had known it, and, therefore, it was now the sole property of that one.

Thus the time of their betrothal passed away.

The wedding-day came at last. When the holy ceremony was over, and the bridal-train had reached the threshold of the church, Murai threw his arms round his silent bride, lifted her into the carriage, and drove to his dwelling, which, as he had resolved, for the present at least, to stay in the city, he had had fitted up with the utmost splendour and elegance. Murai's father had come from his distant country-seat, where he always resided, to be present at the marriage; his mother could not share in

her son's happiness, she had long been dead. On the bride's side, there were her father and mother, her sisters, her uncle, and several other near relatives, for Murai and Brigitta's father had agreed that the nuptials should be celebrated openly, and with unusual festivity.

When the last guests had departed, Murai led his bride through a suite of brilliantly illuminated apartments, showing her their arrangements, and then back into the room intended for their private sitting-room. He then said,

"How happily has all this come to pass, how completely have all my anticipations been fulfilled ! Brigitta, I knew thee at the first glance ! I knew, when I first saw thee, that thou couldst not be indifferent to me, but, whether I should love or hate thee, I could not tell. How happy, that my emotion became love !"

Brigitta replied not, but she laid her hand in his, and her glistening eyes wandered from one object to another with an expression of perfect happiness and repose.

Henceforward they lived quietly and unostentatiously. As they had, at first, met only in society, and had, during the period of their engagement, been together only in the presence of others,

they now spent their time mostly at home. They did not find anything wanting to their happiness. Besides, although their house was already handsomely furnished, there were many things to be improved, and they had to consult together concerning these matters.

In the space of a year she bore him a son, and this new treasure kept them more and more at home; Brigitta nursed her child, Murai transacted his business, for his father had made over to him part of his estates, and these he had to manage, though still living in the city.

When the child no longer required the continual care of its mother, and Murai's affairs were in tolerable training, he took his wife more frequently into society, to public places, to the promenade, the theatre, &c. On these occasions she remarked that he treated her with more tenderness and attention even than when they were alone.

She thought: "Now he knows what I have so long wanted," and she pressed her hand upon her throbbing heart to still it.

Next spring he took her and her child upon a tour, and when in the autumn they returned, he proposed that they should in future live continually in the country on one of his estates, since the

country was not only so much more beautiful, but so much better suited to their tastes than the town.

Brigitta consented, and they removed into the country.

Here he began to engage himself in husbandry, spending his leisure in the chase, either riding, or walking alone, his gun in his hand. It was on one of these solitary expeditions that he first saw a very different woman to any he had hitherto known. He was slowly guiding his horse over a marshy, shrub-grown common, when he suddenly became aware that from the bushes opposite two bright eyes were peering at him with a shy and startled expression like that of the eastern gazelle, whilst soft cheeks suffused with the loveliest blush, like the fresh red of the early morning, glowed beside the green of the foliage. It was only for a moment, for almost as soon as he had caught sight of the vision, the Fairy of the Bushes, who it seemed was also mounted on horseback, quickly moved the reins and flew lightly through the brushwood over the plain.

This was Gabrielle, the daughter of a hoary old Count who lived in the neighbourhood — she was a wild young creature whom her father had brought

up in the country free from all restraint, because he wished her to grow up the child of nature, perfectly unsophisticated and inartificial, altogether unlike the well-dressed, well-schooled drawing-room dolls—as he called them—which were his abhorrence. The beauty of this Gabrielle was spoken of everywhere, but the report had not yet reached Murai on account of his long absence from his estate.

Soon afterwards Gabrielle and Murai met again, and nearly on the very same spot. Again and again they met; they knew not each other's name or place of abode, nor did they inquire, but the young maiden with her wild, unchecked freedom and innocence smiled, laughed to find Murai so often at the same place, railed at him for his cruelty in warring upon the harmless creatures of the woods and plains, and generally ended with challenging him to ride a race with her. He replied in the same tone, accepted her challenge, and then off she flew by his side like a mad thing, he generally allowing her to win. But one day when she, breathless with exhaustion, had vainly essayed to speak, and could only show by repeatedly snatching at his bridle, how much she wished him to stop, and

when as he lifted her off her horse, she whispered in a sweet, low, panting voice that she was conquered—then after he had set right her stirrup, which was out of place, and turning round, saw her standing against a tree, the glow of excitement on her face gradually subsiding, he with a sudden impulse pressed her to his heart, and before he could see whether she was pleased or angry with him, leapt upon his horse and galloped away. It had been done recklessly, but a tumult of indescribable emotions had agitated him that moment, and as he rode homewards, he was haunted by the memory of that soft cheek, that honeyed breath, those speaking eyes.

From that time forward neither ever sought the other again, but once they met, by chance, in a neighbour's saloon, and, in a moment, the cheeks of each were suffused with a deep scarlet.

Murai immediately quitted his home, and went to one of his more distant estates, under pretence of making some arrangements there.

But Brigitta's happiness was now at an end. She had seen that mutual recognition, she had made no remark, but there was a world of shame and conflict in her bosom, as, silently, and like a dark shadowy

cloud, she hovered about the house. At last she grasped, as it were, her swelling, throbbing heart, in her hand and crushed it.

Accordingly, when Murai returned home, she went into his room, and very calmly proposed a separation. He started with surprise and consternation, he reasoned with her, besought her to give up such an idea,—it was all in vain, her answer was ever in the same words, which she repeated again and again; “I told thee, thou wouldest repent it; I told thee, from the first, thou wouldest repent it!”—At last he sprang up, took her by the hand, and exclaimed, in a voice faltering with passion, “Woman, I hate thee; I hate thee unspeakably!”

She replied not a word, she only gazed at him with her dry, tearless, inflamed eyes; but when, three days afterwards, he had packed up his travelling portmanteaus, and sent them on before him, when he himself, clad in traveller’s guise, rode off towards evening,—then she lay prostrate,—not as erst in the youthful overflowing of her heart, among the bushes of the garden, wildly talking to them,—no; prostrate on the floor of her chamber she lay, in an agony of grief, tears bursting from her eyes, hot, scalding tears, as though they must burn through

her dress, the carpet, the very boards of the floor, —yet these were the last tears shed for him, still so ardently beloved; she never wept again. And he, meanwhile, rode over the darkening plain, a hundred times half impelled to shatter his burning brain with the pistol at the saddle. It was still daylight when he rode past the castle of Gabrielle's father; Gabrielle herself was standing in the balcony, but he did not look up, he rode on.

Six months afterwards he sent Brigitta his consent in writing to their separation. Their son, he settled should remain with her; perhaps he thought the boy would be more carefully brought up by her, perhaps it was some lurking remnant of his former love, which prompted him not to rob her of her only consolation, solitary as she was, whilst to him the whole world lay open. He also provided most liberally for both mother and child. The papers referring to these matters he sent along with the deed of separation. And these papers were the last tokens that Murai gave of his existence; he never came again, he never wrote again. The monies which he required for himself, were directed to be sent to a banking-house at Antwerp. This was afterwards confessed by his steward; but even he knew nothing more.

About the same time, Brigitta's father, mother, and two sisters died at short intervals, one after another. Murai's father, too, who was a very old man, did not survive them long.

Thus Brigitta was now, in the strictest sense of the word, left alone with her child.

At a remote distance from the metropolis, she had a house, situated on a barren heath, where no one knew her. This place was called Maroshely, and from it was derived her family name. So now, renouncing her married titles, and resuming her maiden name of Brigitta Maroshely, she retired to this house on the heath, therein to bury herself and her past history.

As in her childhood, when, in compassion, a pretty doll had been given her, and she, after finding a short-lived pleasure in it, had thrown it aside, and taken up despised things, such as stones, bits of wood, and the like, and hidden them as treasures in her little bed,—so now she took the only treasure she had left, her young son, and carried him with her to Maroshely, where she nursed him, and watched him, her eyes resting upon the cradle, where he slept, as the only spot on earth for her.

But, as he grew older, and his eyes and heart

were opened to the world around him, hers were opened likewise ; she began to notice the wide desolate heath, and her spirit longed to people and animate it. She assumed man's attire, rode on horseback again, as venturously as in her youth, and appeared among her peasantry. As soon as the boy could keep himself in his saddle, he went everywhere with her, and his mother's ardent, creative, active disposition was gradually communicated to him. And this her thirst for action grew more and more intense, and she satisfied it ; green hills arose, brooks gushed forth, vines spread their tendrils, and lowered their rich gifts at her command, and thus a fertile land sprang up, as by enchantment, in the midst of the desert. And her labours were doubly blessed, for they stimulated others to make similar exertions ; thus the union before described originated, and far and near, the hitherto uncared for peasantry were awakened to thoughts of freedom and happiness, to words and deeds of charity and goodness.

Fifteen years had Brigitta resided at Maroshely, when Major Bathory, for the first time, visited his country-seat at Uwar. From her, as he himself told me, he had learnt the value of activity and labour, and for her he had conceived that deep,

though late attachment, of which mention has been made.

Having thus related a part of Brigitta's earlier life, we now pass on to describe other events, starting from the point in our history, at which we left off.

CHAPTER IV.

MURAI.

WE rode to Maroshely, and as I had surmised, Brigitta proved to be one and the same with the woman who had lent me the horses. She reminded me with a pleasant smile of our first meeting. I felt my colour rise as I replied, for I remembered the fee I had offered her.

There were no other visitors besides the Major and myself.

The Major presented me to her, as a travelling acquaintance with whom he had formerly much intercourse, and whom he trusted he might now call his friend. I found that she knew almost every incident connected with my previous intimacy with him, and this was a great, a very great pleasure to me, as it proved that he had often looked back upon past times spent in my company with pleasure, or he would not have remembered them so well.

Brigitta said she would not at once show me her castle, and fields, &c., I should see them when we went out to walk, and at different times whenever I came over to her from Uwar, as she hoped I would do very often.

She then reproached the Major with not having been to see her for so long a time ; he excused himself on the score of pressing business, adding that he would not ride over to Maroshely without me, and that he wished first to feel assured that his guest and his friend would agree well together.

We went into a large saloon where we rested awhile. The Major took out his tablets, and asked her several questions on various subjects, she answered clearly and simply, and he took notes of her answers. She then, in her turn, made sundry inquiries of him concerning several of the neighbours, his peasantry, the business now in hand, the approaching Diet. I could not but notice the deep earnestness with which they both spoke on these matters, and the respect with which the Major treated her opinions.

After we had rested sufficiently, and the Major had put up his tablets, we went out to take a walk in the grounds. And now the conversation referred wholly to certain improvements Brigitta had lately

made in her house. She showed us the new colonnade leading into the garden, and asked whether she should have vines trained up it; she was sure, she added, they would also thrive well over the windows of the court at Uwar, where the autumnal sun would shine full upon them. I fancied I could trace something of tenderness in her tone as she thus alluded to the Major's home.

She led us into the park which ten years ago had been a wild oak-forest; now roads were cut through it, brooks flowed in regular channels, and deer were seen stalking to and fro amid the shades. With indomitable perseverance she had caused the vast extent of this park to be inclosed by a high wall, in order to protect it from the wolves. The money necessary for this undertaking had been derived from the profits arising from her stock of cattle, and fields of maize. When the wall was completed, every foot of ground in the park had been thoroughly searched to make sure that not one wolf had been inclosed within it, for only one might have engendered a whole brood, to the terror and destruction of the household. But none were found, and then deer were brought into the park, and preparations made for others. The deer, it seemed, knew the trouble which had been taken on their account, and

were grateful, for whenever during our walk we passed a stray wanderer from the herd, he did not start away or show signs of fear, but looked familiarly at us with his dark, bright eyes.

Brigitta took great pleasure in leading her guests and friends through this park, and assuredly she had reason both to love it and be proud of it.

We were also shown her pheasantry. As we passed quickly along the paths, white clouds as they sailed along the sky, peeping in at us through the oak-branches, I found opportunity to examine Brigitta closely. Her eyes, I thought, were brighter and more deeply black even than those of the roe, perhaps to-day they beamed the more brightly, because the man who could best understand her, and honour her labours, was by her side. Her teeth were pearly white, and her figure, still slender and pliant, bore witness to her undiminished health and vigour. As she had expected the Major, she was attired in woman's ordinary dress, and had laid aside all her business that she might devote the whole day to us.

With conversation on various topics, now upon the future prospects of the country, now, the education of the lower classes, then the improvement of the soil, and, lastly, the characters of certain public men, distinguished for their liberality

and patriotism—with discussions on such subjects as these, we had traversed the greater part of the park. When we returned to the house it was dinner-time. We now saw Gustavus, Brigitta's son,—a beautiful, well-formed youth he was, his sunburnt cheeks glowing with health. He had this morning been round the fields instead of his mother, assigning the labourers their work; and he now gave a brief account of what had been done. After this he sat mostly silent, yet listening eagerly to all that was said. There was a charming sparkle of enthusiasm, tempered by modesty, in his beautiful eyes. The servants, as at Uwar, sat at the same table with us; I noticed among them my friend Milosch, who saluted me as an old acquaintance.

The greater part of the afternoon was spent in looking at certain alterations which were new to the Major, in a turn in the garden, and a walk through the vineyards.

Towards evening we took leave. Whilst we were putting on our overcoats, Brigitta took occasion to reproach the Major with having lately ridden home from Gömör's at night, without sufficient clothing,—was he ignorant of the injurious effect of the moist air of the plain, that he should thus

wantonly expose himself to it?—He did not attempt any defence, but promised to be more careful in future. But I knew right well how it had happened; how he had insisted upon Gustavus' taking his *bunda*, the youth having forgotten to bring one with him. Now, however, we were well guarded and defended; Brigitta herself made sure of this and did not return to the house till we were already mounted, wrapped in our thick overcoats, and the moon was rising. She gave the Major a few commissions, and then took leave of us with simple, unaffected cordiality.

The intercourse between the two had been during the whole day cheerful and easy, and yet it had seemed to me that a secret current of tenderness was running beneath all the while, perhaps kept under and concealed because both felt ashamed to give it free course, as deeming themselves too old for such a feeling. Yet, when on our way back, I could not refrain from candidly expressing my admiration of our hostess, the Major replied,

“ My friend! I have both heard and seen much of the passion of love—whether it were real or exaggerated I know not—but this I can say truly, the society and esteem of Brigitta Maroshely have

afforded me more heartfelt happiness than I have hitherto experienced throughout my life."

There was nothing of passion in his accents or gestures as he spoke thus, it was said so calmly, with such an air of repose, and full assurance, that I was in my heart perfectly convinced of the truth of his assertion. For the moment, I was visited by a feeling rare indeed with me,—envy—envy of the Major, and the happiness he enjoyed in this friendship, and in his domestic industry—for I had at that time nothing in the world that I could call my own, save, perhaps, my wandering staff, my companion and guide from land to land.

That evening, when we reached home, the Major proposed to me to stay with him during the whole of the coming winter. He had begun to treat me with such intimate confidence, to admit me so frankly into the deeper recesses of his heart, that I could not but feel genuine affection, as well as respect for him. Thus I gladly assented, whereupon he said he would assign to me the management of a certain department in the business of the house, to be continually under my control. I should not repent it, he said, and it might be of service in my future life. He was right, it did prove of real service to me. That I have now a household of

my own, a beloved wife for whom I work, I owe entirely to the Major; for on becoming a fellow-labourer in that system of co-operation which he directed, I naturally tried to fulfil the duties appointed me as well as I could; practice soon made me skilful, I felt myself of use, and began to respect myself,—and thus, as I learned the sweetness of labour, I felt how much better was a settled occupation, than that restless rushing to and fro over the earth, which I had miscalled “gathering experience. Henceforth I accustomed myself to regular employment.

Thus time passed away, and I willingly remained at Uwar.

I often visited Maroshely, and was soon received there as a member of the Major's family. I was thus enabled to understand and appreciate better the feelings of both parties. Of unhappy passion, of the secret magnetic attraction, which some people talked of, I could perceive not a trace, on the contrary the bond of union between the Major and Brigitta was of a nature so unusual, that I have never met with anything resembling it elsewhere. It was beyond doubt that sentiment which, between persons of opposite sexes, is commonly called love, yet it did not betray itself as such. With a tenderness,

with a reverence, more like the loving devotion and homage usually paid to a saint, or a being of higher grade, the Major behaved towards this woman, already in the decline of life ; she, on her side, received his attentions with manifest pleasure, and this pleasure beamed upon her countenance and even lent to it a species of beauty, heightening the expression of health and cheerfulness which never left her features. And she repaid her friend with respect and reverence equal to his own ; and, save, perhaps, some times when she was disturbed by anxiety for his health—an anxiety natural to womanly affection, their intercourse was one of unmixed pleasure. And this was all—no more—they met as friends, and parted with regret.

The Major, however, confessed to me, that in one of those moments, of such rare occurrence, when human beings speak to each other of their most secret feelings, they had agreed that the highest and purest friendship should exist between them, but nothing farther ; they would not tempt destiny, lest again her flowery wreath might conceal sharp thorns, lest again they might experience a bitter disappointment. This their resolution had already endured for several years, and would endure to their lives' end.

So spoke the Major,—but not long after destiny interfered unasked, and as quickly as unexpectedly solved for them the problem of their future.

It was already very late in the autumn, almost the beginning of winter, and a thick mist lay spread over the hard frozen heath, when one day I and the Major were riding along the newly-made road shaded by young poplars—we were going out to hunt. Suddenly we heard two heavy reports sound through the mist.

“Those are my pistols, and none others!” exclaimed the Major.

And before I could ask what it meant, he set spurs to his horse, and galloped down the avenue, with a speed that almost terrified me. Foreboding some misfortune, I followed as quickly as I could, and on coming up to him, beheld a spectacle so appalling, that even now my very soul shudders at the remembrance. Near the gallows, where the brooklet ripples murmuringly amid its rushy shores, the Major had found the boy Gustavus wearily defending himself against a pack of wolves. Two he had shot, another, which had leapt on the fore-quarters of his horse, he was keeping off with his pistols, the rest he had spell-bound for the moment by the resolute glance of his eyes, which, kindling

with desperate rage and fear, he kept riveted upon them. Panting with eager expectation they surrounded him—let him but move a limb, let him suffer his glance to quail for one moment, and they will fall upon him with one accord—at this moment, however, the moment of extreme peril, the Major appeared. When I arrived he had already flashed upon them like a meteor, it was fearful to behold him, as totally regardless of danger, almost like another beast of prey, he threw himself upon them. How he had dismounted, I had not seen, but I had heard the report of his double-barrelled pistols, and on coming up to the scene of action, I saw his cutlass gleaming, and that he was on foot. Three—four seconds, perhaps, the struggle may have lasted, I had only just time to fire my shooting-piece among them, and the ferocious brutes dispersed as though they had melted away into the mist.

“Re-load!” cried the Major, “they will be here again immediately!”

He had picked up the pistols which had been thrown down, and was now ramming in the cartridge. Gustavus and I also re-loaded; and that very moment, whilst we were all three silent, we could hear that awful sound, the trot of the wolves past the Oak of Death. It was clear that the famish-

ing beasts were careering round us till their courage should be sufficiently revived for a second attack; for these creatures, except when goaded by hunger, are decidedly cowardly. We were not prepared for a wolf-chase; the gloomy mist lay thick before our eyes, we, therefore, turned to make our way back to the castle. Our horses galloped on in deadly terror; and as we rode I discerned more than once a pursuing shade, grey amid the grey mist, close by my side. With indomitable patience the pack hurried on behind us. It was necessary to keep ourselves in constant readiness against an attack. Once a shot was heard on the left of the Major, but its success we knew not; there was no time to speak, and thus we arrived at the park-grating. As we entered, the noble and beautiful dogs awaiting us within, burst out, and in the next moment their furious bark was heard through the mist as they chased the wolves towards the heath.

“Mount, all of you, directly!” shouted the Major to the servants as they hastened towards us, “and let all the wolf-dogs loose, lest my poor favourites should get hurt. Call together the neighbours, and hunt as many days as you like. I will give you double the usual sum for every dead wolf, those

excepted which lie at the Gallows-Oak, for those we have killed ourselves. At the oak, too, perhaps, you may find one of the pistols which I gave to Gustavus last year, for I see only one in his hand, and the holsters in the saddle are empty; look and see if it be lying on the ground."

"For five years," he said, turning to me, "no wolf has ventured so near us, and we have felt ourselves quite secure. We shall have a severe winter, and it must already have begun in the northern provinces, or these animals would not so soon have come down upon us here."

The servants had heard gladly their lord's mandate, and in an incredibly short time, as it seemed to me, a band of huntsmen was assembled, with a number of those fierce, shaggy dogs, at once so peculiar and so indispensable to Hungarian heaths. There was counsel given and taken as to how the neighbours should be roused, and then they set out, prepared to commence a hunt which might last a week, a fortnight, or even longer.

We had all three looked on at their preparations without dismounting. But on turning from the outbuildings towards the castle, we perceived, for the first time, that Gustavus was wounded; for just as we were passing under the arched gateway, a

faintness came over him, and he was on the point of falling from his horse. One of the servants caught him, and lifted him down, and we now saw that the loins of his horse were stained with blood. We carried him into a room on the ground-floor, looking out upon the garden ; the Major had a fire lighted, and a bed got ready. Meantime, he undressed him, and examined the wound. It was a bite in the thigh, and though not deep, the loss of blood, and the past excitement, had so exhausted the youth, that he fell from one fainting-fit into another. He was put into bed, and messengers were sent off, one to Brigitta, the other to the nearest physician. The Major meanwhile sat watching by his bedside.

When the physician arrived, he prescribed a cordial, and declared that the wound was not in the least dangerous, and that the loss of blood might even facilitate recovery, as it would lessen the violence of the inflammation, always occasioned by wolf-bites. The only real cause for alarm, was the great agitation the youth had gone through, a few days' rest would remedy that, and he hoped entirely cure both the fever and the exhaustion.—There was great delight manifested at this satisfactory announcement, and the physician took his

departure amid the thanks and congratulations of the entire household, for every one loved Gustavus.

Towards evening appeared Brigitta, who, with her accustomed resolution, would not rest till she had thoroughly examined her son's body, and had convinced herself that he had received no other injury than the wound in his thigh. After this investigation she remained sitting by him, administering, from time to time, the medicines prescribed by the physician. A bed was quickly made up for her in the sick chamber, and next morning she again sat beside the youth, listening to his breathing as he lay asleep. Then ensued a scene which I shall never forget—I can see it all before me now, as plainly as though it had occurred yesterday.

I came down stairs early to inquire after Gustavus, and went into the chamber adjoining the sick-room. I have said that the windows overlooked the garden; the mists had dispersed, and a red winter-sun peered through the leafless branches into the room. The Major was standing at the window, apparently looking out. Through the open door, leading to the inner apartment, the windows of which were darkened by muslin curtains, I could see Brigitta, sitting, watching her son. Suddenly a joyful sigh escaped her lips. I looked again more closely,

and saw that her eyes were fixed in transport on the face of the boy who had just awaked, and was now gazing cheerfully around him. But also from the spot where the Major was standing, I had heard a faint smothered sound, and turning towards him I perceived that two heavy drops were clinging to his eye-lashes. I went up to him, and asked what ailed him. He replied, in a low, under tone, "I have no child!"

Brigitta's keen ear must have caught up the words, for the next moment she appeared at the door of the chamber, gazed very shyly at my friend, and, with a glance which I should vainly attempt to describe, and which seemed scarcely to dare express the prayer it would fain convey, said timidly,—
"Stephen?"

The Major turned completely round—each gazed at the other for a second—only one second—and then hastening forwards, he rushed into her arms, which were folded with speechless vehemence around him. I heard nothing but the deep low sobbing of the man, at which the woman pressed him the more closely in her embrace.

"Never to be separated again, Brigitta, either here, or in eternity!"

"Never again, dearest Stephen."

I was in the utmost confusion, and would have quietly slipped out of the room, but Brigitta raised her head, saying,

“Stay, stay !”

The woman whom I had never seen otherwise than grave and self-possessed, had wept upon his neck. And now that she raised her eyes still swimming in tears—so beautiful is that quality, the most beautiful that poor erring mortals can exercise towards each other—forgiveness, her features appeared to me to glow with supernatural loveliness, and it equally agitated and delighted me to look at her.

“Poor, poor wife !” said he,—fifteen years have I been banished from thee, and fifteen years wert thou sacrificed.”

But she folded her hands, and looking beseechingly into his face, said, “I have sinned, forgive me, Stephen, it was the sin of pride—I did not know how good thou wert—it was no more than natural that beauty should attract thee, it is the law of our nature—”

He interrupted her, saying, “How canst thou speak thus, Brigitta?—yes, it is the law of our nature that beauty should attract us, but I had to traverse the whole world over before I learnt that beauty lies in the heart, and that I had left it at

home, in a heart which was good and true, which I believed lost to me, and which, nevertheless, accompanied me everywhere for long years in foreign lands,—Oh Brigitta! mother of my child! thou hast been day and night before my eyes!”

“I was not lost to thee,” she replied. “I have endured years of sorrow and remorse. But thou art mine now, and how good thou art, I know thee now, thou hast always been mine, Stephen!”

And again they were locked in each other's arms as though they could not believe in their recovered happiness. They were like two weary pilgrims who have been lightened of their heavy burdens. The world was open to them once more. A joy, such as we find rarely save in children, had taken possession of them, and it was guileless and innocent as in children—for the most purifying, the most heavenly flower of love is Forgiveness, and thus we find it continually exercised in the love of God for man, and in that holiest of all earthly affections,—a mother's love. Good hearts practise it often, bad hearts never.

The long-separated, now re-united husband and wife had again forgotten my existence, and turned to the sick-chamber where Gustavus, who half divined the meaning of this scene, lay gazing breathlessly at them, his cheeks flushing like a damask rose.

"Gustavus, my Gustavus, he is thy father, and thou hast not known it!" cried Brigitta, as she passed over the threshold into the darkened chamber.

And I went out into the garden, and did not return to the castle till late in the day. I then found all going on right, and a busy joy spread like an atmosphere of sunshine through every room. I was received with open arms as having been the witness of the happy re-union. They had sent everywhere in search of me, as soon as they found leisure to notice my absence. They recounted to me partly in broken sentences at once, partly more connectedly the next day, all their past history as I have already related it.

My travelling-friend, then, was no other than Stephen Murai. He had taken the name of Bathory, that name having belonged to an ancestress of his; he was, however, more often spoken of as the Major, which rank he had acquired in Spain. After long journeyings abroad, some irresistible impulse had driven him to his hitherto neglected estate at Uwar, where he had never been before, where he was known to no one, and where, as he knew right well, he would be in the neighbourhood of his wife. Still he never went to Maroshely to see either her, or the world of fertility she had called

into life, until a report reached him of her mortal sickness, when he immediately rode over to her house, went up to her bed side,—in her fever she did not recognize him,—stayed with her night and day, and watched over her till she recovered. It was then that, mutually affected by this strange meeting, and still agitated by their secret though unacknowledged love, afraid of the future, afraid of each other, and even of themselves, they concluded that singular compact of mere friendship which they had kept for years, and which neither of them ventured to exceed, until Providence, with one sharp stroke of affliction falling equally on both, dissevered it, and restored the closer and more natural union to which they were solemnly pledged.

Now all was well.

In a fortnight the intelligence was spread throughout the district, and people came from far and near with their wearisome congratulations.

I spent the whole of the winter with them, not at Uwar, but at Maroshely, where henceforth they dwelt, for the Major would not take Brigitta away from the house where she was in the midst of her own creation. Happiest of all, perhaps, was Gustavus, who had always loved the Major passionately, calling him the noblest man on earth, and who

could now honour as his father, him whom he had been accustomed to regard as a superior being.

I shall never forget that winter, and those two noble-hearted beings who were now united in perfect though long-delayed happiness.

Never shall I forget their love !

In the spring I again took up my travelling-staff, resumed my German dress, and returned to my German fatherland. On my way, I beheld the tomb of Gabrielle, who had died twelve years previously in the bloom of her youthful beauty. Two large white lilies were sculptured on her marble monument.

With sad, yet not unpleasing thoughts, I journeyed farther, till at last I had crossed the Leitha, and the lovely blue mountains of my fatherland dawned upon my sight.

THE VILLAGE ON THE HEATH.

CHAPTER I.

THE HEATH.

THE place whither I would now desire to conduct you, gentle reader, is not exactly a heath, but a large dreary tract of land situated at a long distance from any town, and known by the name of the Heath, albeit, from time immemorial, nothing has grown thereon saving short grass, and here and there a solitary fir-tree, or a weeping birch, locks of wool, torn from the few sheep and goats that sometimes pass by, clinging to the bark. There are also a few juniper bushes scattered at wide intervals, and these form the only features that enliven the monotony of the landscape, except, indeed, the distant mountains which inclose it as within a soft, blue riband.

But as it often happens that reflective persons, or those in whose hearts Nature has implanted a strong imagination, and poetry of feeling, search out and prefer such places as these, because they can here give themselves up more entirely to their dreams, and listen more undisturbedly to the deep melodies within them—so was it with this same heath. For thither, along with the goats and sheep, often resorted a large black-eyed boy, ten or twelve years of age, apparently to take care of the flock, but when the animals were dispersed in all directions—the sheep feasting upon the short, fragrant grass, and the goats, for whom no fitting pasture could be found, abandoned to the free air, and their own contemplations, now and then, perhaps, leisurely plucking up a few fresh shoots—then he, the dark-eyed boy, had time and opportunity to make acquaintance with the different beings that peopled the heath, and to close with them a treaty of alliance and friendship.

There was a slight ascent where the grey stones, common to those parts, had been heaped one upon another in an odd fashion, so as to form something resembling an orator's rostrum, with an overhanging canopy. The juniper bushes, too, grew more abundantly around this spot, throwing out

their branches on all sides, and entangling them with many a high, luxuriant thistle. Trees there were none, and, therefore, the prospect was much finer, or at least, much more extensive than from other mounds of equal height, especially towards the south, where the distant moorland, so unhealthy for its inhabitants, so beautiful to the eye of the painter, enveloped as it was in its blue misty atmosphere, melted softly into the horizon. The hillock we speak of was called the Roszberg, or Horse-mountain, for what reason is unknown, seeing that within the memory of man, no horse, a possession far too valuable for the heath to boast of, had ever been seen to pass that way.

And it was to this point that our little friend loved best to betake himself, although his charge often wandered away in a widely opposite direction; he knew from experience that none would leave the flock, and that he would be sure to find them all together, however long he might have to seek, and indeed the very trouble of seeking was a pleasure, so that the farther they strayed the better. Thus upon the hill of the Roszberg he founded his empire. Under the stone canopy, by dint of continual exertion, and with no tools except a few sharp-pointed stones, he at length succeeded in

scooping out a seat at first destined for only one person, afterwards widened so as to accommodate two; and he also constructed a sort of box or cabinet among the holes and corners of the rocks, where he kept his linen bag, his bread, and the innumerable treasures that he collected upon the heath. He had companions in abundance. First, there were the large blocks of stone that formed his castle, every one familiar to him, and bearing a name, every one different from its fellows in colour and physiognomy, besides the countless smaller stones which were most of them far prettier, and more varied in hue. The larger he classed according to their merits, some delighting him by their strange shapes, while others displeased him by their commonness—as to the lesser, he loved them all. Then there was the juniper-bush, a tiresome, obstinate subject, unconquerably tough in all its members, and constantly refusing to yield, when called upon to furnish him with a slender, handsome shepherd's staff, or to make way for some newly-projected road—its boughs, too, were all armed with sharp needles, and laden with millions upon millions of blue and green berries, the remnants of the feast spread year after year for the guests of the heath. Then there were those strangely

beautiful flowers—some flame-coloured, some blue as the sky, peeping forth from the bright grass, or between corners of the stones, and others, very small, which sprouted out under the shade of the juniper, opening their little white beaks so as to display the little yellow tongue within. There were also strawberries, two raspberry bushes, and even a tall hazel-tree growing up from between the stones. Nor was there any lack of bad companions also, had any such been wanted; for here and there, although scantily, grew the Herb Paris, whose dangerous fascinations our little friend had been guarded against by his father, and whom he only tolerated for the sake of its bright, black berries, brighter than anything else on the whole wide heath, except, indeed, his own black eyes, and those he could not see.

I had almost forgotten to speak of the living, breathing portion of the community; they must on no account be left unnoticed. I will not describe the thousands and thousands of golden, ruby-coloured, and emerald-tinted little creatures that clambered, sported, and laboured over stone, grass, and herb, for our young friend knew nothing of gold, rubies, or emeralds, except what the sky and the heath showed him; but there were other

beings of more consideration. Especial favourites, were certain noisy, purple-winged, jumping things, starting up by dozens under his feet, whenever he travelled through his domains ; then there were the first cousins of these, the grass-hoppers, arrayed like Hungarian soldiers in suits of various shades of green, chirping and leaping with such merry restlessness, that on sunny days the heath seemed perfectly alive with them ; then the snails, some with, some without houses, striped, arched, and smooth, and trailing lengths of silvery roads over the grass, or over his felt hat, upon which he loved to place them ; then the flies, buzzing, singing, dancing, blue, green, glassy-winged ; then the humble bee with its sleepy, ceaseless murmur ; the butterflies too, especially one little creature with sky-blue wings, the reverse side silver-grey, and such lovely eyes, and one still smaller, with wings like the glowing red of evening ; finally, the birds, the yellow-hammer, the red-breast, the heath-lark, who so filled the air with her warbling, that the whole heavens seemed to resound with church-music, the greenfinch, the hedge-sparrow, the pee-wit, and countless others. All the nests of these birds were to be found in the boys territory, and were sought out, and care-

fully cherished. And many a little red field-mouse he watched as it glided past him, or suddenly stopped to stare at him with its bright, frightened eyes. Of wolves, or such-like terrible evil-doers, none had been seen since the time of his remote ancestors; the worst criminals that had yet fallen under his cognizance were a few egg-sucking weasels, and these he persecuted with fire and sword.

In the midst of all these glorious objects, walked, or ran, or sat, this true son of the heath; his deeply-bronzed countenance beaming with goodness and intelligence, his coal-black eyes, so full of love and daring, with their piercing, unconscious radiance testifying to that dangerous element which, amid his native solitude, had already begun to breathe and burn within him—a glowing and powerful imagination. Around his brow clustered a wilderness of dark-brown curls, blown to and fro by the winds at their pleasure. If so presumptuous a comparison were permitted me, I would liken my favourite to that shepherd boy of whom we read in Holy Writ, and who, on the heath near Bethlehem, communed with his heart, and his God, and dreamed of future kingly greatness. But so utterly poor as our little friend

that shepherd-boy certainly was not, for through the live-long day he, the son of the heath, had nothing to eat, save a large piece of black bread, wherewith in some unaccountable manner, he contrived to nourish his healthy body, and his still healthier mind ; and he quenched his thirst at a clear, cool brooklet, which, issuing from a rock not far from the Roszberg, hurried rapidly across the heath in order to unite with some sister streams, and then to rush onwards to that distant moorland before described. In flourishing times he had, perhaps, a goat-cheese in his pocket. But always had he nourishment such as the wealthiest towns could not supply, viz., a whole ocean of the wholesomest air around him, and an immensity of pure, vivifying light above him. In the evening, when he returned home, his mother brought him a supper of fresh milk, or of good millet. His coat was of unbleached linen, he had also a broad-brimmed felt hat ; this, however, he seldom wore, it was generally left in his castle on the heath, suspended from a wooden peg which he had forced into a cleft of the rock.

Yet he was always happy, and often scarcely knew how to contain himself for joy. From his kingly seat he ruled over the heath ; sometimes

he made journeys through it; sometimes from his rostrum or its canopy, he looked down upon the surrounding country, and as far as his eye could reach, so far his imagination followed, nay farther, and wove over the distance a net of thoughts and fancies; and the longer he stayed, the thicker became the net, until at last he almost felt bewildered and entangled in its mazes. Fear of solitude he never felt, for when no human creature could be seen, when the heath lay before him in perfect stillness, and the hot, mid-day sun breathed heavily over it, then it was, that a crowd of living forms came forth from within his soul, and peopled the desert around. He then sometimes mounted upon the topmost stone, and made a fiery harangue, while below stood kings and judges, nations and their leaders, children and children's children, like the sand of the sea for multitude; and he preached repentance and conversion, and all listened to him; he described to them the land of promise, and called upon them to do the deeds of heroes,—and how ardently at such times, did he desire to possess the power of working miracles! Then he would descend, and conduct his imaginary bands into the farthest and most remote regions of the heath,

and pointing out to them the land of their fathers, feigned to take it with the edge of the sword. Finally, the heath was portioned out among the tribes, and every one was shown the share allotted to him to possess and defend.

Or he built Babylon, that great and terrible city; he built it with the little stones from the Roszberg, and announced to the grasshoppers and beetles, that here a mighty empire would be founded which no one could overcome but Cyrus, who would arrive on the morrow, or the day after, to chastise the godless king Belshazzar, as the prophet Daniel had foretold.

Or he turned the course of the Jordan; that is to say, of the brook, and conducted it another way; or, he did none of all these mighty works, but fell asleep stretched upon the open plain, with a varied tissue of dreams woven over him. The sun looked down upon him, and painted his slumbering cheeks with a colour bright and red as that which he gives to ripe apples, or dark and healthful as the hue of hazel nuts, or if at times his heat brought large drops upon the boy's forehead, he would then take pity on him, and awaken him with a burning kiss.

Thus lived our little friend for many a day,

and many a year, upon the heath ; he grew taller and stronger, his heart was filled with deeper and more secret thoughts, and at last a strange sadness and longing came over him, he knew not why. His education was now completed, all the instruction that the heath could yield him, it had freely given, and the matured spirit now pined for its bread—even knowledge ; and the heart for its wine—love. His eye sought to penetrate beyond the distant vapours of the moor, as if there he must find that which was wanting to him,—as if some day he must gird up his loins, take up the traveller's staff, and go away, far, far away from his flocks.

The meadow with its flowers, the field with its ears of corn, the forest with its harmless inhabitants are the first and natural playmates and teachers of the infant heart. Leave the innocent child to the God within him, and keep evil spirits afar off, and he will educate and develope his own powers in a wonderful manner ; afterwards, when the heart begins to hunger for knowledge and sympathy, then open before his eyes the greatness of the world—of man—of God.

And here let us take leave of the boy upon the heath.

CHAPTER II.

THE COTTAGE.

AT the distance of a good hour's walk from the Roszberg stood a house, or rather a spacious cottage. It was built on the edge of the heath, far from any high road or scene of human traffic; it stood quite alone, and the country around it was also a heath, although not the same as that where the boy tended his goats. The house was entirely of wood, and contained two apartments besides one small back room, all roofed and walled in with strong dark beams, from which were hanging several tankards, with moral sentences curiously wrought upon them. The windows, light, and larger than ordinary, looked out upon the heath, and the house was surrounded by a stable, barns, and sheds. There was also a garden in the front, where grew vegetables, an elder-bush, and an old apple-tree; farther off there were likewise three cherry-trees, and some insignificant-

looking plum-trees. A brook flowed coolingly outside the garden, and was made to fall into a large basin hewn out of a single stone.

This cottage had now become very lonely; its only inhabitants were an aged father, and an aged mother, and a still more aged grandmother: and all were sad at heart, for he was gone away whose youthful spirits had enlivened the house, and who had been the joy of them all. There was still a little sister playing upon the threshold, but she was as yet much too little and too ignorant to supply his place: she was continually asking when brother Felix would come back again. As the father was continually occupied with his fields and meadows, another goatherd had been engaged, but this boy spent his time on the heath in making nets wherewith to catch birds: he came home as early as he could, and always went to sleep immediately after supper. All the creatures on the heath mourned for the pretty dark-haired boy who had left them.

It was a mournfully bright day on which he had quitted home. His father was a silent but sensible man, who had never given him a harsh word, and his mother loved him passionately. It was from her heart of hearts, whose utterances had been so precious to him, that he had imbibed his gentleness and

fertility of imagination, qualities which she possessed in an unusual degree, but could find no means of expending save in fervent love to her son. His father she honoured as the master, who must labour night and day to provide sustenance for his family, for the heath was a poor soil, rewarding the utmost exertions with but scanty fruits, even these failing whenever the Almighty sent a hot season. But through sorrow and privation they clung together, living in peaceful union, and loving each other truly; nor had our young hero ever known that poisonous mildew for the childish heart—strife and contention, except, indeed, sometimes among the creatures entrusted to his charge, when some obstinate old goat would turn restive, and refuse to follow his comrades, which offence the little goatherd would always visit with vigorous cuffs of the fist, the most vicious among his animals patiently enduring such chastisement from him, and from him only, because they all knew that he was their protector and best friend.

His father loved him not less than his mother, but, with the strange reserve common to the lower orders, he never gave vent to his affection,—at least, never before the youth; although it might easily be guessed by the inquietude of his movements, and

the troubled glances which he continually turned towards the Roszberg, whenever his son happened to be absent from home later than usual, and the boy perfectly understood his father's feelings, although they were never expressed.

From such parents he was not likely to encounter opposition when he announced his determination to go out into the world, because he could no longer make himself happy at home. In fact, the father had long since perceived that the boy was tormenting himself with speculations and fancies such as had never occurred to him: he had considered them to be the effect of solitude, and had already been thinking how to find a remedy. The mother, on the contrary, had not remarked anything at all strange in the manner of her son, because her own heart was so entirely in unison with his; yet she approved of his departure from a sort of instinct which told her that it might be good for him.

But there was one other person to be consulted in this matter, not by the parents, but by himself—this was his grandmother, whom he loved, not so much as he loved his mother, but with more reverence. She it was who had supplied him with those airy threads whence he had woven first his solitary joys, and afterwards his secret yearnings, and whole

future fortunes. She appeared to have long passed the boundaries of human life, and would sit, shadow-like, in the garden, with the bright sunshine around her, eternally alone, and eternally surrounded with the society of the dead, and revolving within her mind her own well-remembered, never-ending history. And yet she did not present the usually repulsive features of old age, for when she suddenly addressed some one or other of the beings dwelling in her own mind, as though living and breathing before her, or, when she faintly smiled, or prayed, or talked to herself with a strange mixture of imbecility and poetry, of weakness and power of intellect—at such times she reminded the spectators of some mighty ruin, whose simple grandeur bears evidence of a period of past nobility and greatness. And an experienced observer of the inner man, if any such had passed that way, would easily have discerned from the few intellectual flashes which at times still burst forth, that a spirit of uncommon energy and poetry had here expended its strength in the narrow sphere of a heath-dweller's wife. Her gentle-hearted daughter, the boy's mother, was only a feeble copy of herself. The old woman had throughout her long, laborious life read but one book, but that book was the Bible, and she had read and studied it for seventy years.

Now she could read no longer, nor did she desire that others should read to her, but she often repeated aloud whole passages from the Prophets, and the style and language of the inspired writings were so deeply imprinted in her soul, that even her most common observations were frequently expressed in figurative and oriental phraseology. She repeated to the boy the sacred histories. Often on Sunday afternoons did he sit crouched under the elder-bush—and when she told of miracles and heroes, of terrible battles, and the yet more terrible judgments of God—and when she warmed into enthusiasm, her spirit triumphing over the weakness of her body—or when, absorbed in dreams of her youth, the faded lips spoke fondly and passionately to a being whom her grandson could not see, and in words which he could not understand—or when her imagination assembled around her all the heroes of her tale, her own long-lost friends mingling amongst them, and she made them converse together—then, although he often felt an inward shudder, not the less did he open wide the gates of his soul to let in the fantastic assemblage, and he carried the whole crowd with him next day to the heath, and there acted all over again the scenes and exploits he had heard described.

To this grandmother he must now make known

his intention lest, perchance, she should one day miss him, and inwardly sorrow for him as though he were dead.

And so, early one morning he stood at the door ready equipped for his journey, wearing his usual thread-bare linen garment ; his broad hat was upon his head, the juniper staff in his hand, and the bag which contained two shirts, some bread and cheese, suspended by his side. Sewn within the folds of his inner vest was the little store of money which the cottage could spare him.

The grandmother, always the first awake, was according to custom in the meadow, kneeling on her wooden stool, which she had carried there, and praying. The boy threw a hurried glance over the heath, and then went up to his grandmother and said, " Dear mother, I am going away ; farewell, and pray for me ! "

" Child, thou must take care of the sheep, it is early, and the dew is cool. "

" I am not going to the heath, grandmother, but away into the country beyond, to get knowledge and become a clever man, as I told you yesterday. "

" Yes, thou didst tell me so, " she replied, " thou didst tell me so, my child—in sorrow and anguish I have given thee birth, but I have also given thee

gifts which will make thee like one of the seers—go, and God be with thee, but come back to me again, Jacob!”

Jacob was the name of her son, who had left her in like manner sixty years ago, but had never returned.

“Mother,” said the boy, “give me your hand.”

She gave it him, he pressed it and said, “Farewell, farewell!”

“Amen, amen!” said she, as if just concluding her prayers.

The boy then turned to his parents, his heart swelled high—he said not a word, but hung upon his mother’s neck, and she, weeping bitterly, kissed him on both cheeks, and pressed him to take with him one more piece of money, a piece which had been given her as a christening present, and which she had kept ever since—but he would not take it. To his father he only gave his hand, not venturing to embrace him, and that father made the sign of the cross over his brow, his lips, his breast; but when the boy marked how the rough hand trembled, and the stern lips quivered, he could restrain himself no longer; with a flood of tears he threw himself upon his father’s bosom, and that father’s left arm grasped him almost convulsively for a second, then

loosing his hold, pushed him towards the heath without uttering a word. His mother, however, called him back and told him he must bless his little sister who was still lying asleep in her bed, and had been well nigh forgotten. Three times he signed the cross over the slumbering cherub, then turned quickly round, and strode along proudly towards the heath.

Go then, in God's name, thou guileless being, but take heed that thou bring back safely the jewel which thou bearest away with thee so lightly!

When he reached the Roszberg the sun had risen, and now looked full into two eyes beaming with truthfulness and self-reliance, although red with weeping. At the heath-cottage his rays were mirrored upon the windows, and upon the scythe of the father, who was now going out to mow.

CHAPTER III.

THE VILLAGE.

THAT first evening was very desolate and dismal, and both parents felt sad and sick at heart when they went to rest and saw the empty bedstead of their boy looming through the summer twilight. For him who now perchance was still wandering along the barren, solitary high-road, cared for by none, and despised by most, those two untaught hearts in the distant cottage on the heath were well-nigh breaking, miserable in the thought that perhaps they would never see him again,—but they suppressed their grief and buried it within their own bosoms, and each bore the burden alone, because too shy, and too unaccustomed to give vent to their feelings, or to find words to express them.

But there came a second day, and a third, and a fourth, and the same glorious vault of heaven arched over the heath, and the sun shone down upon the

windows, and upon the old grey roof of the house, as brightly and pleasantly as though he had still been there.

And other days followed, and others again.

The labours and joys of the husbandman, uniformly the same for thousands of years, and still unexhausted, drew their noiseless and wondrous chain through the cottage, and to each one of the links of that chain clung a drop of forgetfulness.

The grandmother, as before, carried her stool to the meadow, and prayed there, and she and little Martha asked day after day when Felix would come back—the father mowed down his rye and his barley—the mother made cheeses and bound up the sheaves—and the stranger-goatherd drove his flock every day to the heath. Of Felix nothing was heard.

The sun rose and set, the heath became alternately white and green, the elder-bush and the apple-tree blossomed again and again—little Martha grew up, and went out to make hay and reap, but she asked no longer for her brother,—and the grandmother, who, inconceivable as it was, lived on like a being whom death had forgotten, did not ask after him either; perhaps, she no longer remembered him, or, perhaps, he had become associated in her mind

with the numerous mysterious forms with which her fancy had peopled it.

Meanwhile the heath-dweller's fields gradually improved, and it seemed as though Heaven would bless his labours, and thus compensate his solitude ; he was soon enabled to fill many sacks with corn and to harness his team with fine oxen—he could now bring home money and articles of various kinds from the world without. And at last there came to father Nicholas, the heath-dweller, a wandering carpenter, who brought kind messages from Felix and a letter, and told how that Felix was now a diligent and promising student in the distant capital ; that everybody loved him, and that some day he would probably become a canon in the great cathedral. The carpenter was well entertained in the cottage and spent the night there, leaving joy behind him when next morning he started off in an opposite direction. And so it happened that now once or twice every year some wanderer found his way over the heath for the love of that gentle and kind-hearted youth who so gladly sent a greeting to his beloved mother. And once, too, there came an artist who sketched the cottage with its brook, and its elder and apple-trees, and made a beautiful picture of them.

Other changes now took place upon the heath. A number of gentlemen visited it, and measured out a piece of that land which in the memory of man had never been appropriated by any one ; and then came an old farmer, who, with the help of his sons and his servants, built a house there, and laboured to make the land apportioned him arable. He sowed in it some foreign corn which was well suited to the soil of the heath, and next year a whole forest of golden ears was waving close by the possessions of father Nicholas, in the very place where, in the foregoing spring, sloes and brambles had been flourishing. This old farmer was a friendly sort of a man, and full of information ; he willingly imparted his experience and assistance to others, and was a good neighbour to Nicholas. They now drove together to the town, the corn sold for higher prices than hitherto, and at the market of the Golden Horse, the heath-dwellers were both well known and well esteemed.

One by one other settlers arrived ; a high road was made across the heath by the landowners, and occasionally a handsome carriage passed over it, such as had never been seen in the neighbourhood before. The farmer's sons also built themselves houses ; and one of them, it was reported, was soon to

become the bridegroom of pretty Martha. And thus, before seven years had passed away, five houses, with gable ends and slanting roofs, and stables, and barns, were grouped around the grey old cottage, and fields and meadows, lanes, and hedges, had extended almost as far as the Roszberg, which was still as lonely as ever—and when St. Pancras'-day came round, father Nicholas had the honour of being elected magistrate of the Village on the Heath, the first who, since the creation of the world, had been appointed to such an office and dignity in this place.

And again, year after year passed on, the young slips which the kind-hearted neighbour had given to Nicholas had become flourishing trees, brought forth fruit in abundance, and supplied the family with excellent cider for Sundays. Martha was married to neighbour Benedict, and had a separate establishment. The heath looked white and then green, but the good father's hair having once turned white, remained so, and the mother's began already to be like the grandmother's; that grandmother alone appearing unalterably the same, a dream-like wreck, only awaiting the return of Felix. Felix, however, like Jacob of former years, seemed to have left the heath for ever. During three years

no tidings had reached them. In the capital, where Benedict went to seek him out, he was not to be found, and those who had known him said that he was gone into foreign parts, perhaps beyond seas. His father ceased to speak of him, Martha had a child of her own, and thought no more of her absent brother, the villagers knew nothing at all about him, and the grandmother asked occasionally for Jacob.—But, the mother's heart still bore his image ineffaceably impressed, as on that day of painful memory when he had wept upon her bosom and left her,—that mother's heart bore him every morning into the fields, and every evening into the house—and that mother's heart it was which alone recognised him, when one Saturday,—it was Whitsun-eve—a tall, sun-burnt stranger, wandering through the evening twilight, his staff in his hand, his knapsack on his back, stopped in front of the cottage.

“Felix!”—“Mother!” There was a cry of joy, and a rush into each other's arms.

The mother's heart is the true, inalienable resting-place for the son, even though he be grey-haired—and nobody throughout the whole world has more than one such faithful heart to rest upon.

And that woman's heart was now well-nigh bursting with emotion, and he who, probably for years,

had not been known to weep, now suffered the long pent-up stream to course down his cheeks, and he folded her in his arms, and pressed her fervently, and smoothed her grey hairs, not remarking that his father, and sister, and half the village were standing round.

“Felix, my Felix, whence comest thou?” asked she at length.

“From Jerusalem, mother, and from the heath near the Jordan—God greet you, father! and God greet you, grandmother; I am come to stay a long time with you—for ever, if it please God.”

He embraced his trembling father, and then his old grandmother, who stood shily and almost timidly beside him, and then turned again to his father, that venerable man with snow-white hair, who, when he saw him last, had thick dark locks clustering over his head, and who now stood by, looking at his stately son with a feeling of embarrassment, almost awe. But the mother, conscious of her own unquestionable rights, felt nothing of the sort; she thought not of his figure or his dress, but her eyes were fixed upon his countenance, and glistened, and sparkled, and overflowed with joy and pride at seeing her own Felix, now become so tall and so handsome.

Then he remembered little Martha, and asked where she was, and his eye sought her among the slighter forms around him, whereupon his mother led towards him a full-grown woman with bright blue eyes, holding a child in her arms,—she reminded him of the pictures of the Madonna which he had seen in Italy—and in the child he recognized little Martha; but the child's mother, who looked timidly, yet affectionately at him, he hardly ventured to salute; at last, however, they greeted and embraced each other right heartily, as brother and sister, and then Benedict came forward and offered his hand, and told him how diligently he had hunted for him through the great city two years ago.

“I was at that time in the land of Egypt,” said Felix, “and you might have sought me in vain even there, for I was wandering in the desert.”

And the peasants with their wives and children, who had crowded in front of Nicholas' door, and looked on with a neighbourly curiosity, were likewise greeted kindly; he raised his traveller's hat and gave his hand to all of them, although they were strangers to him.

And several of the neighbours followed that happy party into the cottage, and stood by while he dis-

burthened himself of his store of presents and information. It was all silence without, for after their usual fashion, men and women sought betimes their place of rest, while the red clouds of Whitsuntide were still hovering over the village.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VILLAGERS.

WHEN the sun had risen the next morning and the inhabitants of the Village on the Heath were clad in their best, ready to set out for the church, which was at a long distance, there was one more villager, and one more church-goer than before. During the night many had forgotten his arrival, but the morning recalled to remembrance their new acquisition, and all rejoiced over it, some from curiosity, some from love. But all, even his parents were not entirely free from a vague feeling of apprehension,—there was something in him which they could not understand, and they felt uncertain whether the uniformity and monotony of their village life would not be disturbed.

He was already up and standing in the open air, dressed in the linen-coat and broad hat of the

country, his large, bright eyes gazing contentedly around, when his mother stepped out and inquired whether he too would go to church, or whether he were not tired and would not rather worship God at home.

“I am not tired,” was his answer, “and I will go with you.”

Festive groups were now seen here and there upon the green sward, some approached our friends to say “Good morning,” others more timid, especially the young girls, held back, and others, who were obliged to stay at home, stood at their doors or windows, and silently looked on.

The Whitsuntide dew was still sparkling on the grass when the whole company began to move forward, Felix leading his mother by the hand, and guiding her tenderly down the hill, as in days of yore she had guided him, a delicate boy, when on Sunday mornings the goats and sheep must be left at home that he might go to the house of God. At length the last group had vanished behind the hillock, and a deep stillness came over the deserted village, — the morning advanced, it was heavy, and dry, and hot, a thin blue smoke rose here and there from among the roofs of the cottages, while in the cottage-garden

the ancient grandmother knelt in prayer—and when at last, after an hour's silence, the low distant sound of a bell was wafted through the warm clear air, as often happens on like days, many a form knelt down likewise upon the turf and beat its breast ;— then all again was still, the sunbeams fell down more perpendicularly upon the houses, and then again obliquely, so as to cast the shadows upon the other side. At last it was afternoon, the church-goers returned, they lightened themselves of a part of their holiday attire, and every family was soon engrossed by the Whitsun feast.

And what was there now in Felix which his fellow heath-dwellers could not comprehend, and why had he remained so long away from them, and where had he been ?

They did not know.

He had accompanied them to church with almost the same child-like devotion as in years past, he had listened meekly to the words of the priest, he had returned homewards quietly by his mother's side, and whenever during their meal his father began to speak, Felix's voice was silent immediately, and he listened attentively. Towards evening he sat with his grandmother under the shadow of the elder-bush talking and listening

to her disconnected, incomprehensible stories. And when, during the day, his mother looked closely into his face, seeking there, half anxiously, half hopefully, the well-remembered, delicate features of her former light-hearted, fearless, beautiful boy of the heath, she found him and was satisfied ; for, however faintly, the image of the boy was unmistakeably impressed upon the countenance of the man,—the countenance was the same as of old, only infinitely more beautiful, so beautiful, indeed, that she often thought she could not be his mother—and yet, when he turned towards her the tranquil mirror of his eyes, so full of goodness and intelligence—or when she gazed at those cheeks, almost as youthful as formerly, only darker in hue, so that his teeth, always white, now showed like pearls from the contrast, while the same kind lips, now manly and full, seemed as though some pleasant word, whether of affection or instruction, must ever be about to drop from them, she felt that she need have no fear, that he was indeed the same.

“He is as good as ever,” sang the maternal heart in its transport, “he is as good as ever, although so much greater and cleverer than we are.”

And in truth there was such a halo of simplicity and purity surrounding this young man that the unsophisticated heart of the heath-dweller's wife could not but render it silent homage.

What then was it which had carried him safely through the corruption of the world, so that he had brought back to his native solitudes a mind and body unstained and pure as a temple of the Lord ?

They did not know, but more and more cheerfully and naturally did his heart bare itself before them whilst the hours of the quiet festival glided past.

Late in the evening, when all, Martha and her child, Benedict and some other neighbours, were sitting round the table of white beechen-wood, he told of the Promised Land ; how he had been there ; how he had visited Jerusalem and Bethlehem ; had ascended Mount Tabor ; had bathed in the Jordan ; how he had seen Sinai, and had wandered through the desert. He told them that when his wooden chests should arrive he would show them earth brought from the Holy Land ; also dried flowers and herbs from the same blessed regions, where the Saviour's feet had trod, besides whatever else they could produce of rare and costly ; and he

tried to describe how much hotter, more lonely, and more holy were the heaths and wildernesses of that country than those of their own land, which might be called gardens in comparison—and as he thus spoke every eye was fixed upon him, every sound was hushed, and they all forgot that the evening tints had long since died away, and that the starry hosts were glittering in close array above the roofs.

Of great cities, of men, and their commerce with each other, he had told them nothing. His words fell from his lips so sweetly and readily that everything he said seemed to be exactly that which they most wished to hear, and no one thought of asking after other matters.

At last Martha carried her sleeping infant away, Benedict went too, the others followed; and more satisfied, more happy even than yesterday, his parents went to their rest, and even the father thought his Felix had now become almost like a preacher and priest of the Lord.

The very next day he re-visited the heath, and remounted his old rostrum; the beetles, and flies, and butterflies were busy as of old, the song of the heath-lark was as sweet, the eyes of the field-mouse as bright as ever. He rambled about, the

sunbeams weaving their golden web around, the moorland looming in the distances and the whole country alive with twittering, and chirping, and singing. And as his father saw him rambling thus, he passed his rough hand over the thin grey locks on his brow, and the wrinkles which time and toil had imprinted on his face, as if to convince himself that it was not the boy of former years who was again on the heath ; that the long, long time which had elapsed were not a dream. The neighbours, too, when they saw him day after day going out and in among them, talking and playing with their little ones, and clad in the common linen vestment, passing through their fields and giving them counsel and help, began evidently to look upon him as quite one of themselves, although it was equally evident that he was altogether of another kind.

One incident must not be omitted ere we proceed to describe the future course of his life ; an incident which was meant to be kept secret, but which, on the contrary, spread abroad, and won him at once the hearts of all the villagers.

When at last his trunks had reached the town, and were conveyed therefrom in a waggon to the heath,—after he had sought out and shared his presents,—after he had exhibited his store of treasures,

—flowers, feathers, stones, or weapons, and all had been duly admired—that same evening, seeing his father sitting alone in the little back room shaded by the elder-tree, whose branches sent their foliage through the window, he went up to him and said with a certain embarrassment of manner, and an almost tremulous voice :—“ Father, you have brought me up, and treated me with affection from the hour of my birth,—but I have ill requited your care, for I have left you to struggle and labour by yourself, and to bear alone the burden of supporting my mother and grandmother,—and when I came home you did not reproach me with it, but met me with love and kindness as of old ; I can make you no return save by determining never again to leave you, and by loving and honouring you more than ever. Many, many years have I left you alone, but now I will always remain here. And as, whilst I was in the world beyond, I learned certain sciences whereby I earned my bread, and my wants were few, there is still a considerable sum remaining for you. I now bring it here, for God has sent me to be a comfort and help to you, and I pray you, father, to receive it kindly and spend it upon your house, and take rest in your old age.”

But the old man, colouring highly, and trembling

mingled with pain and pleasure, had risen from his seat, and with both his hands motioned the papers away from him, saying, "What wouldst thou, Felix? I am so taken by surprise—God forbid that I should live by the labour of my child. Ah! God knows that I could give thee nothing, no, not even education, thou hast had only what the Lord himself gave thee upon the heath; and for thy pious heart, thou hast not been indebted to me. Thou owest me nothing—children are a gift of God, and we must bring them up for their own good, not to please and serve ourselves only;—forgive me, Felix, I could not teach thee, and yet, methinks, thou art grown so good, so good that I could weep for joy."

And scarcely had he spoken the words when he broke into a loud sob, and clumsily felt after his son's hand. And as Felix gave it, he could no longer restrain himself, he must press his face against his father's shoulder, and wet the coarse cloth of his garment with his hot tears. But the father quickly recovered himself, and somewhat ashamed at the emotion he had betrayed, went on in a calmer tone:

"Thou art much cleverer than we are, Felix. If thou stay with us, do what thou wilt, I will not

have thee help me ; there is Benedict, and there are his labourers ; besides I too have saved up something, so that I can have a servant of my own, if need be. But as for thee, thou must work after thine own fashion, as God wills that thou shouldest, and as is only right."

Felix however still thought within himself, that in future, if necessary, he would rather assist his father, and that then the feeling of not having brought him home any thing of value would become less oppressive. He had, however, brought him the best of gifts, his own warm heart, overflowing with love, and that, to the sternest father, would have been a treasure far more precious than all earthly goods.

Nicholas now tried to appear indifferent, and employed himself in various ways about the room ; but no sooner had Felix gone out, than he ran hastily to his wife, to tell her what their son had wanted to do : and she folded her hands, ran to the images of the saints which adorned the room, and burst forth into ejaculations, alike expressive of maternal pride, and the deepest humility and thankfulness.

Then she went out, and spread the intelligence far and wide.

It was now clear that he was good and gentle, and

true-hearted, and besides all this, every one could perceive that he was handsome and noble in person, and they inquired no farther.

Felix had now a piece of land assigned him from the heath ; it was at some little distance from the village, and here he began, with the aid of various work-people, to erect a stone-house. That it was larger than he needed for himself, was observed by several of his neighbours ; nevertheless, when the autumn came, and it was built and furnished, he occupied it alone. The winter passed away, the spring succeeded, and Felix sat in his mansion on the heath ; and, as in the days of his childhood, ruled over all its living creatures, as well as over all the silent forms that peopled it.

What was it then that had been restored to his parents and neighbours in him ?

They knew not.

But I know it well. A gift had been imparted to him which ennobles a man, and yet, causes him to be frequently misunderstood by his brethren. Upon the heath had its presence been first manifested, to the heath it must carry back its possessor. He, in whom dwells a pure and holy imagination, cannot do otherwise than listen to its whispers in humility.

At the time Felix went away, not knowing whither he went, he had been impelled by a desire to gain knowledge, the thirst within him grew insatiable, he could not satisfy it. And so he went among men; he studied national character, he made friends, he strove, he hoped, desired, and laboured for an unknown object,—he even strove after the good things of this world; but, when he had acquired all these, knowledge, influence, friends, property,—something like a bright star still seemed glimmering beyond, some idea of sweet repose, of happy solitude,—was it that his heart had ever borne impressed upon it, the heath, the happy heath of his innocent childhood?—He sought the deserts and wildernesses of the East, not moodily, not in sullenness, but with a deep, calm, poetic yearning. —And the same irresistible impulse bore him back to the solitude of his early home. And when he now sat upon his rostrum, as before, with the sunny surfaces of the heath glistening before him, peopled as before, with a multitude of imaginary forms, some looking up to him with the steady gaze of history, others with the ardent glance of love, others again throwing the wide mantle of their great deeds across the plain,—and whilst they spoke to him of the soul and its true bliss, of death and all that follows it,

and of many other things, for which language has no expression,—and his whole being was wrapped in devotion, and angels seemed thronging the desert around with their calm, silvery forms, and perfuming the air with their wings,—oh ! then his heart swelled within him, he was infinitely blest in thinking as he thought, and he felt that no place could be so good for him as this.

His aged, half-witted, grandmother, had been the first to understand him.

“There are,” she said, one day, “an infinitude of gifts scattered over this earth ;—there are the blades of corn, the sunlight, the fierce winds of the mountains ; there are men who cultivate vegetable life, and spread its blessings through every land ; there are others who make roads, build houses ; then again, there are others who scatter abroad the golden seed that germinates in the hearts of men, the words and the thoughts which God causes to spring up in their souls. Felix is become like to one of the seers and prophets of old, I have said so long ago, and I have helped to make him such, for it was I who cast into his soul the seeds of the Book of books ; and he was always soft as wax, and high-minded as one of the heroes.”

And now, in his turn, Felix busied himself with

his grandmother, more than any one else did ; he alone could make her speak connectedly, and he alone could perfectly understand what she said ; he often read aloud to her from his books, and his aged scholar listened attentively, and a sunny light was kindled in her face, as though she understood all that she heard.

Thus the spring passed away, and Whitsuntide came again ; but a very different Whitsuntide from the last. A fearful, heavy weight hung over both Felix and the village, and with both, that oppressive weight was melted away on Whitsunday,—but how differently !

Before dismissing the picture of his simple life, we will add this one feature, the last we remember.

When, as from time to time, he passed through the village, with little presents for his sister's children, such as fossils, muscles, or snail shells,—the dark locks falling over his lofty brow, and his black eyes beaming with a deep, anxious expression, he looked so handsome, that many a young maiden in the village cherished his image as the secret idol of her heart. And he, too, cherished an idol in his heart,—one fond hope of sweet domestic bliss had he borne with him to the heath, when he turned his back upon the rich prizes and promises of the world,

and the morning of Whitsunday was to prove whether he had built his house for himself alone, or not. All the eloquence of his soul had been expended in a letter, the answer to which he awaited in speechless anxiety, it seemed as though it would never arrive.

Meantime Whitsunday approached nearer and nearer, and, to the secret, unseen weight, which oppressed him, was now added another, threatening the whole village, like a ghastly spirit approaching with noiseless steps. Thus it was: that same brilliant sky, to which Felix so frequently raised his eyes in fervent prayer, that same brilliant sky had now preserved its unclouded brightness for several whole weeks, and a hundred anxious faces were now turned despairingly towards it. Felix had been too much occupied with his own hopes and fears to trouble himself about the weather, but, one afternoon, having walked over the heath to the village, it occurred to him that there must have been an extraordinarily hot season, for above the withering heath was now visible one of those glorious phenomena which he had often observed in the East, but never thought so beautiful as it appeared here, viz., the absorption of water by the sun. From the huge bell of heat which hung on

high, bright airy clouds floating around it, there issued, in various places, broad streams of light, stretching like roads across the wide canopy of heaven, and forming, or rather cutting out, as it were, upon the wide heath, pictures of dazzling gold, whilst the distant moor lay beyond, enveloped in a dim milky mist.

Thus had it been frequently of late, and the present day closed like the preceding ones; in the evening the sky was swept clean from the least cloud, and showed like a lofty, pale, yellowish cupola.

As Felix returned home from his sister's, he also remarked that the blades of corn were thin and weak, their downy ears pointing straight upwards, like lances.

The next day was still fine, and the following days still more so.

Every other feeling was now hushed before the terrible apprehension which daily grew stronger in the minds of the villagers. The sky was now completely cloudless; ever blue, and ever placid, it smiled upon the despairing mortals. And there appeared another phenomenon, one which in ordinary times might not have been noticed, but now, when thousands and thousands of glances were

fixed daily upon the heavens, it was regarded as an ominous spectre warning them of approaching evil. A series of forests and hills far beyond the heath, and hitherto invisible therefrom, now stretched their jagged summits into the sky so plainly, that not only could every one perceive them, but each individual peak and ridge could be pointed out and named. And when this was reported in the village, all came out to see, and some stood silently gazing at the fearful vision for the hour together, until the distant objects became indistinct, melted into detached streaks of length and breadth, and then suddenly vanished.

The song of the heath-lark was hushed, but there was heard throughout the whole day and even through the close, dewless night the everlasting chirping and fidgitting of the grasshoppers, and the frightened cry of the pee-wit. The rapid brooklet now looked like a thin silken thread crossing the grey surface of the heath, and the wheat and barley near the village stood erect, but still green and unsubstantial, their light rustling at every breath of air mournfully testifying to their poverty. The fruit, small and unripe, lay upon the ground, the leaves were brown and withered, and of flowers nothing was

to be seen upon the turf which, when trodden, crisped under the feet.

It was a time of extremity. Urgent were the supplications addressed towards the closed vaults of heaven. Sometimes, indeed, a huge mountain-like cloud hung over the southern sky during a whole day; and surely never before had anything so immaterial as a cloud been gazed on so long, by so many eyes; but when evening came, that mountain-cloud glowed with the richest purple hues, and passed away, severing into a thousand roseate wreaths, which dispersed themselves widely over the firmament and then vanished; and millions of bright kindly stars shone down upon the village.

And now it was the Friday before Whitsunday; the soft blue air had become blank like a stone. That afternoon father Nicholas walked over the heath; the brook was now dried up, the grass had, as it were, changed into a carpet of grey felt, scarcely affording sufficient pasture for a rabbit, and yet that intractable son of the heath, that despised and ill-treated bush, the juniper, stood there with martyr-like endurance, the only living vegetable, the one green banner of hope; and lo! he freely offered even this

year such an abundance of the largest blue berries as had never been seen before, at least not within the memory of the heath-dweller. A sudden thought sprang up in the mind of Nicholas, and he determined to consult with the elders of the village upon the subject, if there were no change in the weather during the next two days. He rambled far and wide, examining minutely the rich supply of that harvest unsown by man, and unthought of until now, and he found it the more abundant the farther he went; extending indeed, to an almost immeasurable distance. He sighed when he remembered the thousand poor animals who would be reduced to want if these berries were gathered, but he said to himself, "The Lord will provide for them, He will teach the birds of the air to fly farther, or to find some other nourishment."

As Nicholas returned homewards through the fields, he took up a clod of earth and pressed it in his hand, it crumbled to pieces like chalk. And the corn, matured before its time, had already begun to bleach. There were, indeed, clouds in the sky striping the blue expanse with innumerable milk-white streaks; at another time they would have been harbingers of rain, but now he

could not trust them, for they had been there three days, and had vanished again as though swallowed up by that insatiable blue. And many other careful fathers likewise went through the fields wringing their hands, and when it was evening, and detached tempest-clouds hovered over the horizon, darting flashes of light at each other, a peasant returning from the town saw the aged grandmother, now scarcely to be reckoned among the living, kneeling in the field and praying with upstretched hands, as though the universal distress had restored her strength and consciousness, and as though of all in the village her prayers would prevail most in the other world.

The clouds gathered thicker all around, but there was no rain, only lightning.

As father Nicholas passed through the hedge, he met his son, and was surprised to see him looking more sad and downcast than any other of the villagers.

"Good evening, Felix," said his father, "hast thou quite given up all hope?"

"What hope, father?"

"Is there any other hope than that of the harvest?"

"Yes, father, there is another; that relating to

the harvest will be fulfilled, the other will not. I will tell you what I have done for you and the villagers. I have written to the proper authorities at the capital, and described to them the state of affairs here; I have friends in the capital—some of them are very dear to me,—they will help you, so that you need never fear want, and I too shall help you to the best of my ability. But be comforted, and comfort the villagers; you will not require help from man; during my wanderings, I learned to understand the signs of the heavens, and it is now clear to me, that it will rain to-morrow. God makes everything go on well, all is well, even when He sends pain, or requires a sacrifice.”

“May thy words be fulfilled, my son, that we may celebrate the festival together joyfully.”

Saturday morning dawned, and the whole sky was covered with clouds, but, as yet, not a drop had fallen. Yesterday every one had given up all hopes of the harvest, to-day, every one believed that the healing showers would come. Matrons and maidens stood with their basins and wooden vessels, ready to take them to the brook when the rain should descend, in order that they might this year, as heretofore, make their preparations for the coming festival. Afternoon came, and not a drop had

fallen, certainly the clouds were as dense as ever, but evening too arrived, and still there was no rain.

Late that same evening, the messenger, whom Felix had sent to the town, returned, bringing a letter from the post-office for him. Felix paid the messenger, and, when left alone, went up to his table, on which stood a lighted lamp, and unsealed the well-known handwriting.

“It costs me much pain, of a truth, extreme pain, to be obliged to decline your offer. Your self-chosen position in the world makes it impossible for me to consent; my daughter sees that it cannot be, and has acquiesced in my determination. She will spend the summer and winter in Italy in order to recover herself, and sends you through me her best wishes, Ever your true, faithful friend,

* * * *

Felix, when he had read this, turned from the table with a pale countenance, and quivering lips, tears trembled within his eyelashes. He took two or three turns in the room, then slowly laid the letter on the table, carried the light to a chest, took out a packet, arranged the letters of which it was composed, added to them the one just received, en-

closed them all in an envelope, and sealed them up. He then replaced the packet in the chest.

"It is all over," he said, drawing a long breath, and he went up to the window, his eyes resting on the dark, nightly heavens. Below was stretched a blighted garden, the heath was wrapped in slumber, —the distant village was visited by dreams of hope.

There was a long, long silence.

"My self-chosen position," repeated he, at last, rousing himself; and, in the midst of his deep anguish, this thought flashed through his mind, and brought consolation. He extinguished the light, and went to rest.

The next morning, when the eyes of all were open, and turned anxiously to the light, the sky was completely grey, and a thick, gentle rain poured down upon the whole country.

All was now right, the joyous festive groups of church-goers dressed themselves, and gladly suffered the precious drops to penetrate their clothing, all eager to repair to the Temple of God, and give thanks for His mercies to them. And Felix, too, suffered the rain to penetrate his dress, he too went to church, and gave thanks, and no one could guess what his calm, gentle demeanour concealed.

This is all we can relate of Felix, the dweller on the heath.—Of his subsequent labours, and their fruits, nothing is known to us, but, whatever they may have been, when the Great Day shall come, and that pure-minded man shall stand before his Judge, and say, “Lord I have traded with the one pound thou didst confide to me,”—then, although that pound, when weighed in the balance, may be found wanting, He, the Searcher of hearts, will judge more mercifully than man judgeth, for His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways.

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by SAMUEL BENTLEY & Co.,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

60411877

